

Arafat accelerates release of detainees

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat ordered the release this weekend of more than 80 opponents of the peace process who were jailed following a spate of suicide attacks against Israelis, a Palestinian official said Sunday.

In all, 84 detainees were freed Saturday from jails in the West Bank towns of Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarem, marking the single highest wave of releases of militants since the crackdown began in March, said Azzam Al Ahmad, public works minister in Mr. Arafat's self-rule government.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has decided to release all detainees who have no charges pending against them," he said.

Officials declined to say how many of the hundreds of militants arrested following the suicide attacks in February and March remained in PNA jails, but they were believed to number fewer than 200.

Saturday's releases came amid a series of moves by Mr. Arafat to calm Palestinian popular frustration with his lack of success in keeping up the pace of the peace process since the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in Israel in June.

They also followed growing concern both among Palestinians and international human rights groups over torture and other abuses by Palestinian police.

To counter these charges, the PNA was due to sign an agreement with the International Red Cross later Sunday which would open all PNA jails to unrestricted inspection by Red Cross officials, officials said.

Palestinian officials in Jenin told AFP that 22 members of Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad were released from the town's jail on Saturday.

Police officials told the Palestinian daily newspaper

Al Ayyam, which is close to the PNA, that a further 36 prisoners were released in Nablus and 14 in Tulkarem, all suspected members of Hamas or Islamic Jihad. General Ahmed Eid, Bethlehem police chief, told Al Ayyam that 12 detainees had been released there on Saturday "on orders from President Arafat" and that he had been ordered to wrap up investigations on the remaining militants in his jail so those with no charges pending could be freed soon.

After the last four suicide bombings in February and March which killed 58 people plus the bombers, Israel said it would freeze the autonomy process unless Mr. Arafat cracked down on the armed opposition movements.

Up to 900 militants were reported held at the height of the crackdown, but the PNA has been gradually releasing those found innocent of any specific crimes over recent weeks, including a number of top Hamas figures.



KURDS JUBILANT IN BAGHDAD: An Iraqi-Kurd (right) gives the victory sign with other Iraqis during a demonstration in Baghdad on Sunday. U.S. forces in the region have been put on a high alert status after Iraqi troops and Kurdish fighters from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) seized control of the northern Iraqi town of Erbil (see page one) (Reuters photo)

Qadhafi opens 'man-made river' and vows never to bow to U.S.

GARBOULA, Libya (Agencies) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi vowed on Saturday never to surrender to U.S. pressure, saying a huge man-made river project in his country was proof that his country was concerned with development and peace.

"The world can see that we are making life with water," Colonel Qadhafi said at the inauguration of a new phase of his "Great Man-made River" project, 25 kilometres southeast of Tripoli.

"This is the biggest answer to America and all the evil forces who accuse us of being concerned with terrorism. We are only concerned with peace and progress. America is against life and progress, it pushes the world towards darkness," he said.

Libya has been on Washington's list of states that sponsor international terrorism since December 1979. Tripoli's refusal to hand over to Britain or the United States two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am plane over Scotland led to the imposition of U.N. sanctions on Libya.

"Just because someone refuses hegemony and

colonialism doesn't mean he wants war. We want peace, but we refuse to surrender. America presents propaganda. We present clear action to the world," Col. Qadhafi said.

The Libyan leader and dignitaries celebrating the 27th anniversary on Sunday of the coup that swept him to power simultaneously pressed buttons to open a barrier that allowed water to rush out across a small valley.

The huge project pumps water from the south of the country to the Mediterranean coast.

U.S. Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, who on Friday received the 1996 Muammar Qadhafi Human Rights Award in Tripoli, called the project "another miracle in the desert."

Many of the 2,000 Libyans at the celebration ran or dove into the water while men dressed in traditional clothes gave a display of horsemanship.

Women ululated while young men shouted slogans urging Col. Qadhafi to stand up to the United Nations and the West.

"Increase your challenge — stuff the sanctions," they shouted to Col. Qadhafi, who smiled and raised his fist.

Col. Qadhafi is spending an estimated \$25 billion on the water project, which he has described as the eighth wonder of the world. South Korea's Dong Ah construction company is the overall contractor for the scheme.

Work on the first phase, which takes water to the towns of Sine and Bengazi, began in 1984 and ended seven years later. The second, which was inaugurated on Saturday, started in 1992 and supplies Tripoli with water via the Tarhunah regulating station 60 kilometres southeast of the capital.

Tarhunah is where the United States has accused Col. Qadhafi of building an underground chemical weapons plant. Libya has strongly denied the allegation, saying tunnels at the site are part of the "Great Man-made River."

Three more phases will complete the river project. Environmentalists are divided over the impact of the project. Water reservoirs under the desert in the south of the country were formed in the last ice age which ended about 10,000 years ago and are not renewable.

Iran slams German 'insult' over Bani-Sadr testimony

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri launched a scathing attack against Germany on Sunday for allowing a former Iranian president to testify in a trial on the 1992 murder of four Kurdish leaders in Berlin.

"Do you understand what you are doing? In hearing false testimony from a deposed president accused of hijacking a plane you are supporting terrorism," the speaker said angrily during a session of the parliament. "This is an insult to Iranian people."

A court in Berlin, suspecting Iranian leaders' involvement in the murder of the four Iranian Kurdish opposition figures, invited Abolhasan Bani Sadr to testify during the trial of an Iranian and four Lebanese charged with carrying out the killings in September 1992.

The former president, who lives in exile in Paris, implicated Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in the assassination in a restaurant in Berlin.

German authorities have already issued a warrant for the arrest of Iran's Intelligence Minister Ali Fallahian.

The charges have strained relations between Iran and its top trade partner Germany, which is a staunch supporter of dialogue with Iran despite efforts by the United States to isolate the

Islamic republic. "The German authorities are behaving like an ostrich. On the one hand they organise a campaign against the Iranian people, while they say they favour dialogue with Iran," Mr. Nateq Nuri said.

"We want a dialogue with you but that doesn't mean we need you," he added, charging that European countries "have become a haven for terrorists who launched deadly attacks against Iranian leaders."

Iran has requested Germany to extradite Mr. Bani Sadr for his alleged hijacking of a plane used to flee the country in 1981.

After being deposed, Mr. Bani-Sadr briefly sided with Iran's main armed opposition group which launched a violent campaign to topple the Shiite Muslim authorities in Iran.

The German weekly Der Spiegel quoted a report by German federal police as accusing the Tehran government of sponsoring acts of terrorism abroad.

"It can be assumed that no operation takes place without the approval and involvement of the Iranian foreign ministry and the embassies and consulates in place," Der Spiegel quoted the report as saying.

"We are dealing with organised crime at the highest level. Behind all these crimes is a sovereign state with its entire logistical capabilities," Der Spiegel further quoted the report as saying.

Bahrain frees 100

MANAMA (AP) — Scores of opposition activists have been freed from detention on orders from Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Bahrain's ruler, a government source said Saturday.

The source, who did not want to be identified, said nearly 100 activists were released Friday "to give them a chance to overcome the mistakes of the past and return to society to live as good citizens."

Authorities in Bahrain have rounded up hundreds of activists since a violent opposition campaign began in December 1994 to press demands for political and social reforms. The government does not comment on the arrest or release of activists, but it is known to have freed many in small batches. It has also put scores of activists on trial before an emergency court set up in March to deal with the opposition.

Israeli Jew and Jordanian get married, but no honeymoon

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The first recorded Israeli-Jordanian marriage took place last week but the couple were unable to go on honeymoon, the Yediot Aharonot newspaper said Friday.

The civil ceremony was performed in Cyprus, the first such mixed wedding since Israel and Jordan signed a peace agreement in 1994, but the newlyweds had to separate eight hours later to return to their respective countries, the paper said.

A couple whose religions are different must leave Israel to marry, and civil

marriage is not recognised in the country.

What is more bridegroom Yasser is not entitled to stay in the Jewish state.

The story began a year ago when Yasser Shiran Ayad, 27, met Lea Itzkowitz-Aharon, 36, of Rishon LeTzion near Tel Aviv during a reception at the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv. The two trade representatives took to each other immediately.

Lea was divorced with two children, while Yasser was single.

"The first time that I saw him I was enchanted by this handsome, intelligent man.

I gave him my office telephone number. Two days later he called me, and we met at a cafe in Tel Aviv," she said.

They kept calling each other after he returned to Jordan. Two months later, he came back to Israel at Lea's invitation and took a studio near Rishon LeTzion. But he was detained one night by police officers who noticed that his visa had expired.

Lea came to get him after agreeing to accompany him to the border.

"But I saw myself that on his passport the police had mentioned that he stayed in

Israel longer than his visa allowed and that he could not get a new entry visa for two years," she said.

Then she went to Jordan where she met his family. They tried in vain to convince the Israeli embassy to give him a visa, before finally opting to get married in Cyprus. But his Cypriot visa was only valid for a few hours, and therefore the couple were deprived of a honeymoon.

Lea says she still hopes that Yasser will come soon to live legally with her in Israel. "We will have two children of our own," she told the newspaper.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Austrian chancellor meets Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky became the first foreign leader to meet here with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Sunday at the start of a two-day official visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories. Mr. Vranitzky met Mr. Netanyahu at his Jerusalem office and then hosted an official lunch for the Austrian leader. The Austrian chancellor was due to meet Israeli President Ezer Weizman later Sunday before travelling to Gaza City early Monday for talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. He was also scheduled to hold talks with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy Monday afternoon. Mr. Vranitzky was the first foreign head of government to visit Israel since Mr. Netanyahu took office in mid-June.

Hariri says exiled general can return

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said Saturday that General Michel Aoun, who headed a military government from 1988 to 1990, may return from exile in France. "The period determined in the agreement on Aoun's stay abroad has ended," Mr. Hariri told reporters. "He can return when he wants and take part in political activities in an atmosphere of liberty and democracy like other politicians." The date of his return is up to him. The Christian general was ousted in 1990 by Syrian-Lebanese military intervention when he refused to give way to Elias Hrawi, who was elected by parliament. Gen. Aoun initially took refuge in the French embassy in Beirut and was banished for five years in 1991, a period which ended Aug. 28.

Cypriot gang accused of kidnapping

LARNACA (AFP) — A gang of Cypriot men is accused of kidnapping, beating and threatening to kill 11 Bangladeshi students in a popular holiday town, a court here was told. Cypriot police believe between eight and 10 local men wielding sticks and clubs kidnapped the Bangladeshis "for kicks" from their living quarters in the resort of Ayia Napa. Larnaca district court was told Saturday. The police statement said the Bangladeshis students were beaten with sticks and thrown into a hotel swimming pool before being dragged to a deserted field where they were threatened with death. It said the Cypriot gang then let their victims go after warning them to leave Cyprus within 24 hours or be killed. Antonis Pasiolas, 24, and 29-year-old Andronikos Andronikou were remanded in custody by the court on Saturday for five days. Judges turned down a remand request against four other suspects on Friday.

UAE to get third satellite TV channel

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will get a third satellite television channel, out of Sharjah, in September, the official news agency WAM reported on Sunday. State-owned Sharjah Television signed an agreement on Sunday to lease a channel from an Arab satellite for \$1.5 million per year, it said. The five-year agreement with the Arab Space Communication Corporation (Arabsat) includes setting up a ground station. Arabsat has two satellites in orbit and plans to launch another one. The government-owned television stations of Abu Dhabi and Dubai already broadcast via Arab satellites.

Seven Algerian guerrillas killed

ALGIERS (AFP) — Seven armed guerrillas were killed in three separate operations by security forces during the past five days, the Algerian press reported Sunday. The Al Watan daily said five were killed late Wednesday in a shootout in the coastal resort of Zeralda, west of Algiers. Another was shot dead by security forces Saturday in Tizi-Ouzou, in Kabylie region. Al Watan said he had killed a policeman but was surrounded by security force and shot after fleeing into a school. The same day, another guerrilla was killed in an ambush, the Liberte daily reported. None of the incidents has been officially confirmed.

Yemen to invite foreign observers to election

SANAA (R) — Yemen plans to invite international observers to monitor parliamentary elections in April 1997, the first polls since the country's 1994 civil war. "The government has been directed to invite non-governmental organisations...to follow up the election process and monitor it to guarantee its fairness," Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said in an interview with the official Al Thawra daily published on Sunday. International observers monitored the last poll in 1993 when 22 parties vied for 301 seats in parliament.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:05Adventure On The Rainbow Pond
15:30Oscar's Orchestra
15:45Playabout
16:15Doc. — World Echo
16:30Hey Dad
17:00News Flash
17:02Sciences Cartoon
17:15La Vie Desant Moi
17:30Game Show — Lex Bon Genies
18:00Magazine — La Marche Du Siecle/Part Two
19:00Le Journal
19:15Magazine — Cinq Sin Cinq
19:30News Headlines
19:35The Hypnotic World of Paul McKenna
20:10Doc. — Women With Power
21:10The Lazarus Man
22:00News in English
22:25The Bold and the Beautiful
23:15Bodies of Evidence

PRAYER TIMES

04:46Fajr
06:06Sunrise/Duha
12:36Dhuhr
16:11Asr
19:05Maghreb
20:25Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweflith, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654922

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614100

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with temperatures above average by 2-3 degrees centigrade and winds northerly moderate to strong and seas moderate to active.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

calm. Min/Max. temp. Amman..... 20/34
Aqaba..... 26/38
Deraia..... 18/36
Jordan Valley..... 24/38
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 35, Aqaba 38 Humidity readings: Amman 39 per cent. Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Khalid Abdo.....657129
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi.....894788
Dr. Salman Daboubi.....776751
Dr. Bassam Karadshah.....759200
Ferdows pharmacy.....778336
Al Asema pharmacy.....637055
Nairookh pharmacy.....623672
Al Salam pharmacy.....636730
Yacoub pharmacy.....649445
Shmeisani pharmacy.....636381
Nairookh pharmacy.....847632
Najib pharmacy.....847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazin Abu Bakr.....776852
Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601
Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....637111

Civil Defence Department.....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....630341

Civil Defence Emergency.....199

Rescue Police.....192 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade.....617101

Blood Bank.....775121

Highway Police.....843402

Traffic Police.....896390

Public Security Dept.....630321

Hotel Complaints.....605800

Price Complaints.....661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints.....897467

Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121

Overseas Calls.....010230

Central Amman Telephone.....623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101

Jordan Television.....773111

Radio Jordan.....774111

Water Authority.....680100

J. Electricity Authority.....815615

Electric Power Co.....636381

RJ Flight Information.....08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITAL

AMMAN:
Husein Medical Centre.....813813/232

Khalidi Maternity.....644281/6

Akileh Maternity.....642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362

Mallas, J. Amman.....636140

Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071

Shmeisani Hospital.....669131

University Hospital.....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital.....667327/9

The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/27

Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3

Al-Bashir.....775111/26

Army, Marka.....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50

Amal Hospital.....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital.....091983323

Zarqa National Hospital.....0919800560

Ibn Sina Hospital.....091986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital.....091990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital.....021275555

Greek Catholic Hospital.....02127275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital.....021247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital.....031314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 108153200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08152700.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:30Sanaa (RJ)
09:00Damascus (RJ)
10:10Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20Beirut (RJ)
10:30New Delhi (RJ)
11:00Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
11:45Jeddah (RJ)
15:00London (RJ)
17:20Cairo (RJ)
18:00Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
19:00Bangkok (RJ)
20:45New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
23:25Casablanca (RJ)
03:55Tunis (add) (RJ)
04:10Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
05:20Dubai (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00Istanbul (TK)
07:45Beirut, London (BA)
08:45Beirut (ME)
13:00Khartoum (SD)
14:30Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:30Kiev (6U)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:30Doha (Q7)
21:25Cairo (MS)
23:00Tel Aviv (LY)
23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:30Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Beirut, Athens (OA)
04:00Royal Wings (RW) Flights
20:30Aqaba (RW)

HUJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman8:00 am, every Mon
Dep. Damascus5:00 pm, every Mon
Dep. Damascus7:30 am, every Sat
Arr. Amman5:00 pm, every Sun

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:35Beirut (RJ)
11:00Casablanca (RJ)
12:30Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:15Cairo (RJ)
13:25London (RJ)
13:25Frankfurt (RJ)
13:30Amsterdam, Detroit (add) (RJ)
19:00Tunis (add) (RJ)
21:45Damascus (RJ)
21:45Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:15Dubai (add) (RJ)
22:30

BRIEF

meets Netanyahu

Chancellor Helmut Kohl met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday in Jerusalem. The two leaders discussed the situation in the Middle East and the peace process. Kohl expressed his support for the peace efforts and the role of the United Nations. Netanyahu thanked Kohl for his support and expressed his confidence in the peace process.

neral can return

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is expected to return to Israel from his visit to the United States. Rabin's visit was part of a diplomatic mission to strengthen relations between Israel and the United States. Rabin is expected to return to Israel on Monday.

d of kidnapping

A gang of criminals is threatening to release a kidnapped woman unless a large ransom is paid. The woman was kidnapped from her home in a suburb of Amman. The gang demands a ransom of \$50,000. The Jordanian authorities are working to negotiate the release of the woman.

TV channel

The United Nations is planning to launch a new television channel to provide news and information to the people of the Middle East. The channel will be available in Arabic and English. It will focus on the situation in the Middle East and the peace process.

millas killed

A group of guerrillas has killed a security force member in a recent attack. The attack took place in a rural area of Jordan. The guerrillas were fighting against the government forces. The security force member was killed in the attack.

servers to elect

Members of the Jordanian Bar Association are preparing to elect new servers. The election will take place in the near future. The servers are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Bar Association.

RAZ RAILWAY

The Raza Railway is a project that aims to improve the transportation infrastructure in the region. The project involves the construction of a new railway line. It is expected to be completed in the near future.

MARKET PRO

The market is showing signs of recovery after a period of volatility. Investors are optimistic about the future of the economy. The market index has risen significantly in recent days.

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Home News

WHO joins hands with Ministry of Health to offer solace to the young

AMMAN (Petra) — The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Ministry of Health Sunday opened a three-day workshop dedicated to the preparation of a national strategy to improve physical and mental health in adolescents and enable them to better interact with the local social environment. A report presented at the opening session by sociologist Sahri Rubethat stated that adolescents constitute nearly one-seventh of the Jordanian population and that these youths continually experience crises which, heretofore, have found no

Woman found strangled, burned in Karak

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Karak police Saturday instigated an investigation in the case of a 16-year-old woman who was found strangled in her father's house after it was set ablaze in the town of Ei in Karak Governorate, according to official sources. Fire units were called to extinguish a blaze at Ibrahim Madi's house in the town of Ei Friday evening, and subsequent to its cessation a female body was discovered inside the house, an official said. The woman's body was covered with second-degree burns. Preliminary investigations indicated the victim, Rania Ibrahim, 16, was the daughter of Mr. Madi and that she was choked before the house was consumed. "An autopsy revealed that she was strangled by wire," an official source told the Jordan Times. Moreover, the official added, fire investigators believe the house to have been wilfully burned. Police authorities contacted by the Jordan Times said they have not arrested anyone in connection with her death and that they were investigating the incident. Meanwhile, Irbid police have apprehended a 20-year-old man in connection with a shooting incident which left one person dead and another in critical condition, Public Security Department (PSD) reports said. According to the report,

Germany to grant JD220,000 for veterinary vaccines

AMMAN (J.T.) — Germany Sunday granted Jordan half a million Deutsch marks (JD 220,000) to help promote the work of the Jordan Centre for Veterinary Vaccines (JCJV) and facilitate the provision for Jordanian and foreign markets with high quality veterinary vaccines. Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf-Huneidi and German Ambassador to Jordan Heinrich Reiners signed the grant and exchanged ideas pertinent to it which, according to German embassy officials, will help the JCJV implement the latest phase of the Production of Veterinary Vaccines and Sera Project. The JCJV which started the project in 1986 with the assistance of the city of Bonn, through the German

WHAT'S GOING ON

PIANO RECITAL

* Piano recital by Abboud Al Ashqar (National Music Conservatory) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

* "Louis XIV, Enfant Roi" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

SCIENCE WEEK

* Fourth Annual Science Week at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman at 9:00 a.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works Batnol Al Fakiki at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until Sept. 11.

* Works by artist Abeer Abu Joodih at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 5.

* "Summer '96" exhibition at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Oct. 8.

* Abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian artist Khalil Al Kofahi entitled "From Jordan... Man and Charming Nature" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Sept. 2.

Experts see urgency in meeting 21st century telecommunications needs

By Christina Schlegel
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Post and Telecommunications Jamal Sarairoh Sunday opened the international Arab States Telecommunications Finance Colloquium stressing that Jordan has fully realised the importance of the telecommunications sector and now aims to realise the necessary funds to realise future projects in this field. Finance and Economics Director at the Telecommunications Development Bureau (BDT) A. Enderlyn called the event a "pioneering conference." In her speech covering the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)/BDT as well as finance, economics and trade in the Arab states, she said that the conference will concentrate on publicising a financial draft policy including innovative recommendations and proposals on the critical issue of financing. She added that the draft policy will be presented to the Arab States Regional Telecommunications Development Conference (ARB-RTDC) to be held in Beirut from November 11 to 15, 1996. The conference also offers opportunities for international telecommunications corporations and local enterprises to enter into and cultivate contacts with Arab states' finance/trade executives and telecommunications decision-makers towards joint schemes of partnership across the whole spectrum of financial possibilities, according to organisers. In his inaugural speech, before an audience of more than 130 delegates from the 23 Arab states and several foreign countries, the minister concentrated on the currently executed National Communication Programme which will extend the existing telecommunications network by 600,000 lines, which will provide Jordan with nearly 1,000,000 telephone lines after the project's completion. "Jordan," he said, "has witnessed changes in all sectors. The aim is to enter the new century with a special status in the field of telecommunications in order to catch up with other countries, such as in Asia and Latin America that are doing very well in this sector." He stated that the country fully realised the importance of the telecommunications sector and emphasised that the development in this field should go hand in hand with increasing efficiency of telecommunications services. To support this strategy, the ministry recently imposed a new telecommunications law which deals with the organisation of the telecommunications sector and the issuing of licences to companies with the intention to invest in this field. According to Mr. Sarairoh, the Jordanian Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) is currently in its final phase of converting itself into a fully state-owned commercial entity, prepared to compete with several telecommunications companies, without specifying their names. The minister's speech was followed by welcoming remarks by Ahmed Laouyane, the director of BDT. He also stressed the colloquium's goal as being "centred on economic importance of telecommunications," which includes financing, the necessary infrastructure as well as the impact and exchange of services. "We are aiming at the mobilisation of the necessary resources to make an improvement in the telecommunications sector possible," Mr. Laouyane said stressing that the strategic options for such an achievement are of a political nature. The fact that the "tele-density" in the Arab World has not exceeded 5% by now shows the urgent need for improvement in this respect, as "the 21st century will be the century of information and the provision of excellent telecommunications services will play a pivotal role in the economic situation of every country," he further emphasised. To reach a desired density of 9 per cent at the end of this century the volume of necessary investments amounts to \$14 billion, whereas \$8 billion can be financed by self-generated funds which leaves a shortage of \$6 billion to be raised from foreign sources through bilateral and multilateral projects as well as by the private sector, Mr. Laouyane explained. "If this way of financing works for the telecommunications sector," he concluded, "it will also work for other sectors of economic importance like tourism and banking." Stressing that 30% of the world economy will be based on services — primarily on telecommunications services — he said that the Arab countries have to face the importance of this sector for the economy and adapt themselves to the new environment. The challenge is the development of human resources who are sufficiently trained to meet the requirements." Mr. Laouyane said. Referring to a World Bank study, he added that in "our world each country, whether poor or rich, provided with natural resources or not, can become a wealthy nation, as the new economy is based on individuality and intellect." Other finds included in a conference statement are: Only about 60% of telephone-line demand is satisfied by now which indicates that the waiting lists are growing as fast as the number of telephone lines added, a study issued by the ITU/BDT specified. Among the Arab countries Morocco serves as a model as it has almost tripled its base of main lines since 1990, followed by Syria, which has by now over one million main lines. The basic indicators for Jordan are, according to the study, as follows: with a total population of 4.36 million (1995), it has a density of 45/km². The Kingdom has 317,000 main telephone lines (1995) which means 7.29 per 100 inhabitants. International telephone traffic — that means international telephone calls — occupies the biggest portion of trade in telecommunications services. The value of cross-border calls amounted to around \$60 billion in 1994, over 10 per cent of global telecommunications revenue. This sector is of special importance to the Arab countries as it is a substantial money-earner and contributes 53% per cent of the total of their telecommunications revenue. Most of the Arab states are net importers, that means there is more incoming traffic than outgoing. The exceptions are Saudi Arabia and UAE where the case is vice versa. The increasing use of mobile phones is also an important factor. The growth rate in 1995 was over 100 per cent with practically all new subscribers over 200,000, headed by Kuwait and Lebanon. Such phones are most relevant for the Arab states as it can help to alleviate waiting lists and be a revenue generator for the region's telecommunications operators at the same time. For example, in the UAE, mobile revenue accounts for 15% of total telecommunications revenue. Furthermore, the development of mobile cellular lines supports foreign investment. In the case of Jordan, the strategic partner is the American telecommunications company Motorola. In the field of data communications, Internet is the indicator for its growth. Starting from zero in 1992, there were some 3,000 Internet hosts in the Arab states by January 1, 1996. Closing his presentation, Mr. Laouyane stated that the current telecommunications revenues (as a percentage of GDP) only amount to 1.6 per cent even though that should have reached 2 per cent by now. An increase up to 2-3 per cent is planned as experts forecast that the share of telecommunications in the economy will rise to 60-70 per cent of the whole service sector. The Arab States Telecommunications Finance Colloquium, which is being held at the Forte Grand Hotel will last from until Sept. 4.

More than one billion people live in absolute poverty — CARDNE

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — "The rapidly growing birth rate worldwide is creating both social imbalances between men and women and poverty. These two dilemmas are the greatest challenges facing governments, institutions and individuals," Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamous said Sunday. Recent global, economic, political and social changes are forcing the region to re-evaluate many concepts, procedures, and plans making it imperative to focus and invest in the available potential capabilities of the human race, he added. The minister's statements came during the inaugural session of a three-day regional seminar organised by the Regional Centre for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development for the Near East (CARDNE) entitled "Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations: Partners in Rural Development." More than one billion people live in absolute poverty, according to Mr. Abu Jamous, the majority of whom are women with limited access to income, education, adequate health care or nutrition. "We should implement qualitative as well as quantitative indicators for social development, which should include analysis of poverty, employment and other factors and to monitor programmes and policies and to create new means to ensure its fulfilment," Mr. Abu Jamous asserted. Amal Sabagh, director of CARDNE, called for governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to unite their efforts to improve rural development. "One of the greatest challenges any institute faces is a lack of resources, and the immense gap between development in the countryside as opposed to urban areas," Ms. Sabagh said. This requires the accomplishment of coordinated and comprehensive work between various institutes involved in rural development, she added. According to Omar Hussein, assistant secretary-general in charge of development at the Ministry of Social Development, disorganisation among miscellaneous institutes in the Kingdom "is a main contributing factor to weakening efficacy." Another factor, he told the Jordan Times, is the proliferation of such institutes. Dr. Hussein said one of the recommendations that will be included in Jordan's presentation is the foundation of a committee network whose aim is to coordinate work among the various institutes in the Kingdom. The stated objectives of the seminar are: the analysis of collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organisations in the field of rural development, the discussion of channels of communication and means of their activation, a mechanism ensuring effective future partnership, and the definition of which obstacles to communication exist and procedures for their removal and finally increasing effective rural development to conform with human exigencies. Specialists from governmental organisations and NGOs of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, Syria and Tunisia will present joint reports. In addition, representatives from the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) will also be contributing.

Jordan to modernise transport sector—minister

By Issam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Minister of Transportation Nasser Lawzi Saturday stressed the ministry's intention to promote the transportation and trade sectors in the Kingdom in terms of a draft legislation which would discourage monopolies and guarantee unhindered competition among various and sundry transportation companies. In an interview with Al Ra'i daily, Mr. Lawzi declared that "Jordan wants to modernise its transport sector in conformity with modern European standards." In reply to an inquiry regarding the potential privatisation of the Public Transportation Corporation (PTC), Mr. Lawzi said that the topic would be broached next week by a ministerial development committee and then passed on to the Council of Ministers. "Privatising the PTC is the second priority as stated in the report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)," he said. The minister added that Jordan's projects to the Cairo Economic Conference were projected as dealing with the Shidiyah Mines-Aqaba Railway project, the Aqaba port project, the Amman-Aqaba Railway-project and a possible Amman governorate subway. He deemed it necessary to hike the capital of Royal Jordanian from JD 70 million to JD 210 million to reconstruct the airline and lower its debt burden to the Jordan Petroleum Refinery.

Trial to begin for accused gunmen

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Six men, five of who are accused of attacking the office of the Central Intelligence Department (CID) at Baqaa refugee camp in December 1994, Saturday retracted confessions they signed while under interrogation, claiming the statements were extracted under duress. The sixth defendant is charged with distributing pamphlets slanderous to His Majesty King Hussein. They are currently facing due process at the State Security Court, where in a two-hour court session, all six defendants claimed they were detained by security forces and subjected to psychological and mental torture before being handed over to military prosecutors. The prosecution charged that on Dec. 26, five of the defendants went to Baqaa camp and sprayed the CID caravan with machinegun fire, then fled the scene, injuring one officer in the process. The sixth defendant had been apprehended by the authorities three days earlier. According to the State Prosecutor charge sheet, the defendants are accused of assault and intent to block the appropriate (CID) authorities from exercising their duties in accordance with the Constitution and distributing pamphlets slandering the King. The accusation further charged that the suspects initiated their activities in April of 1994, in a plot to carry out extremist attacks on tourists and security departments in the Kingdom. During the court session, attorneys Khalid Afghani and Hatem Shreideh defending Tha'er Ghanem and Shadi Taha respectively asked the court tribunal to be released from their assignment "because both defendants were not cooperating with us." The court tribunal rejected the request saying that their withdrawal would delay the course of trial for an additional two months. "Therefore to achieve justice the Court Tribunal respectfully rejects your request." At the end of the court session, the defence attorneys of two of the six defendants requested the court give them time to call their defence witnesses. To this petition the presiding Judge Yousef Faouri agreed and set Sept. 17 to begin depositions.

Missing Belgian girls found in Cologne, report says

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — Two teenage girls who went missing earlier this week amid continuing revelations of a paedophile ring operating in Belgium were found in Cologne, western Germany, Belgian radio reported Sunday.

RTBF reported that the mother of one of the two girls, who were discovered safe and sound late Saturday, claimed the girls had been kidnapped.

But the prosecutor's office, which has so far declined to give details about the girls' disappearance or their reappearance in Germany some 100 kilometres away, has not confirmed her statement.

Rachel Legeard, 18, and Severine Potty, 19, from the eastern Belgium town of Nandrin, went missing after they failed to return home last Thursday from a shopping trip to Liege, 20 kilometres away.

The two girls had telephoned Severine's mother to say they would be late because Rachel's wallet had been stolen, and they went to the police station to report the theft.

The two girls then failed to show up at the bus station where Rachel's mother waited for them Saturday

afternoon. Police in Liege immediately set up a crisis unit and issued portraits of the two girls, which were circulated across the Benelux countries, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Austria.

Belgium has been rocked for the past two weeks by the arrest of 10 people, including convicted paedophile Marc Dutroux, and the discovery of the bodies of two girls.

Two more girls have been freed and a third pair, whom Mr. Dutroux has admitted kidnapping, are still being sought.

Police resume digging for bodies Monday in houses owned by Mr. Dutroux while teachers brace for a barrage of questions from shocked children starting the new school year.

After resting for the weekend following two gruelling weeks of searching in the six houses owned by Mr. Dutroux in and around the southern city of Charleroi, police will return to one in the city's Jumez suburb.

Radar-imaging equipment used in Britain's "house of horrors" serial murder investigation, located two suspicious underground cavities in the cellar

of the house Friday.

These will be investigated Monday, as will an "anomaly" found by the equipment in another Dutroux house in the suburb of Marcinelle, where they found two other sexually abused girls — Laetitia Delbez and Sabine Dardenne — in a dungeon.

Police will also return to another house where trench-like cells for holding kidnapped children were found.

The discovery of the web of paedophile abduction, porn and death has horrified Europe, prompted the government into tightening the rules on early release from jail of sex offenders and triggered calls for a global war against the trade.

Mr. Dutroux, an unemployed electrician, was released 10 years early in 1992 after serving only three years of a 13-year sentence for raping five children.

This, and the fact that he has fathered three children by his two wives, has bewildered adults and children alike.

"We know we will get questions about the Dutroux case, and we are preparing for it," Myriam Eynikel, a primary school teacher in

Brussels' Strombeek suburb, told Reuters.

"My daughter is terrified, she is glued to every news-cast. We have tried to tell her there are adults with bad intentions, without focusing on the sex-abuse aspect," she said.

Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene summed up the national mood when announcing tougher sex offence rules Friday.

"Children represent our future. They deserve a happy childhood. We must protect and guarantee their rights. Everything must be put in place so that this drama is never repeated," he said.

The hunt for missing girls has spread beyond Belgium's borders. Belgian police have visited Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and have contacted colleagues in Austria and Germany.

Mr. Dutroux has been named in Bratislava as a suspect in the murder of a young Slovak woman. Interpol's Slovak office has said he was also believed to have planned the kidnapping of at least one other Slovak woman.



President Bill Clinton and Vice-president Al Gore wave to the crowd gathered in the town square of Dyersburg, Tennessee, Saturday. The president and vice-president were on the final day of their two-day bus tour (Reuter photo)

Clinton, Gore end campaign bus ride

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (R) — As the sun went down over the Mississippi River, President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore Saturday rolled into Memphis to end a two-day bus tour that drew welcoming crowds in tiny towns in four key states.

Creeping along at about 30 to 40 miles (48 to 64 kilometres) an hour, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore and their wives Hillary and Tipper and their 14-bus caravan stopped often at rural communities stirring up grass roots support for the Clinton-Gore ticket's reelection on Nov. 5.

The bus tour wound through parts of Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee, Mr. Gore's home state, all states that Mr. Clinton carried in 1992 and considers important to his reelection bid.

After travelling about 225 miles (362 kilometres) over 21 hours Friday and Saturday, the buses stopped, two hours late, at a boisterous Memphis rally of more than 10,000 people, where Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore preached their gospel of economic prosperity and urged supporters to help them "build a bridge" to the 21st century.

"You've made us very happy tonight — everyone here," Mr. Clinton said, sweeping his arm out toward the crowd. "Hillary and Tipper and Al and I, we kind of like doing this. Can you tell it?" the crowd roared.

Mr. Gore apologised for being late but said "in every little town we've gone through there's been a big crowd and in many of them the crowd was of such a size that the president said, 'We've just got to stop.'"

Since Mr. Clinton began campaign travelling a week ago, he has delivered over two dozen speeches, some long and some short, and talked to countless voters.

It has left his voice hoarse and his throat sore, and White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Mr. Clinton was treating his

throat with an anti-inflammatory spray.

The president, described as "dog tired" by aides, cancelled a planned trip to Pennsylvania Tuesday in order to get some rest from his relentless schedule.

Along the bus route the candidates passed flocks of people on the roadside waving their hands. The rural setting was lined with cornfields as well as mobile homes and abandoned cars. A cemetery in Covington, Tennessee, had a U.S. flag and a Confederate flag.

In Troy, Tennessee, Mr. Clinton with one breath talked about getting a kiss from 101-year-old Mrs. Jim Bob Robertson and with the next announced that in keeping with his commander-in-chief duties he had put U.S. forces on high alert in response to Iraqi attacks on Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

"She may be 101 years old, but she still kisses real good," Mr. Clinton said as the crowd roared with laughter.

At rally speeches, Mr. Clinton insisted his policies have led to strong economic growth in America and rejected Republican Bob Dole's proposed 15 per cent across-the-board tax cut as unaffordable.

He promoted his more modest proposals for tax reductions for middle-class families, including a new one announced Thursday at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago to free homeowners of a burdensome capital gains tax.

New polls showed Mr. Clinton getting a boost out of the convention and leading Sen. Dole by up to 21 percentage points despite the alleged sex scandal involving his former top campaign manager, Dick Morris, who resigned Thursday.

In an interview Friday with MTV, Mr. Clinton said he had no plans to rely on Mr. Morris as a political advisor in the future but would talk to him as a friend.

Meanwhile, Eileen McGann, the wife of Mr. Mor-

ris, said she did not press her husband for details about a reported affair with a prostitute. Time magazine reported Saturday.

Mr. Morris' alleged affair was reported during the democratic convention last week by a sensationalist supermarket tabloid.

"I thought it would be destructive to ask about the details and try to find out what was true," Mrs. McGann told time in an interview conducted Friday. "I'm an adult. I accepted Dick's apology. I said, 'let him who is without sin cast the first stone.'"

"I felt very upset. We talked about it, but I didn't grill him on the details," she said, adding that they had a 20-year relationship.

A Newsweek poll released Saturday found 24 per cent of U.S. voters surveyed Thursday said they were less likely to vote for Mr. Clinton because of Mr. Morris' resignation.

Also on Saturday, the Washington Post reported that the Clinton-Gore campaign will examine thousands of dollars of expense account payments to Mr. Morris to ensure the campaign did not pay any expenses related to his alleged affair with a prostitute.

The paper quoted campaign general counsel Lyn Uchitelle as saying she did not think the review would find anything amiss because the campaign has strict rules on what it will reimburse.

Campaign records show the Clinton-Gore '96 Primary Committee Inc. paid Mr. Morris a total of \$231,048 in consulting fees and expenses from April 1995 through this July, of which nearly \$27,000 was listed as hotel or travel expenses, the Post reported.

Mr. Morris does not plan to advise Clinton even on an informal basis now that he has resigned, he told Time.

"I've sent myself out of the game," he said. "I'm not going to run the campaign from the locker room. I told the president that."

Catholics burn condoms, sex books

NAIROBI (AFP) — The Roman Catholic Church in Kenya set fire to sex education books, aids awareness pamphlets and condoms, describing them as "pornography", to demonstrate its opposition to artificial birth control, local newspapers reported Sunday. The Archbishop of Nairobi Cardinal Maurice Otunga led a congregation of young faithful in torching the books and condoms at the city's Uhuru Park Saturday. A similar ceremony to denounce contraception and sex education literature was held jointly by the Roman Catholic Church and the Muslim clergy in Nairobi in August last year. The Roman Catholic Church opposes the use of contraceptives, saying they encouraged sexual promiscuity and immorality.

Man holds woman hostage aboard lifeboat

MANILA (AFP) — A man armed with a shotgun and hand grenades hijacked an inter-island ship and held a passenger hostage on a lifeboat before surrendering Sunday in an 11-hour high seas drama, officials said. Arnie Ang, senior vice president of the company that owns the vessel, the Saint Francis De Assisi, said the suspect suddenly grabbed seven passengers shortly before midnight Saturday and demanded 50,000 pesos (\$1,923) and a lifeboat. The suspect, identified as Rolando Gloria, 21, released six passengers after being landed the money but took a woman hostage, Elsie Orizco, with him aboard the lifeboat and sped away. Mr. Ang said the ship, belonging to Negros Navigation, was on its way from Manila to Iloilo City in the central Philippines when the incident happened near the Cuyo group of islands, about 400 kilometres south of Manila. The ship diverted from its route to shadow the lifeboat and radioed a nearby Coast Guard station for help. The hostage-taker was forced to surrender peacefully 11 hours later after the ship and a Coast Guard patrol boat closed in on the lifeboat, Mr. Ang said.

Barnard in row over 'rejuvenating' creams

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong transplant pioneer Dr. Christian Barnard, is at the centre of a row here over a range of "rejuvenating" creams, it was reported Sunday. South African Barnard, who performed the world's first heart transplant in 1967, was quoted as saying that his name and face are being used to promote "stay-young" skin products, without his permission. Barnard, 73, has lodged a complaint with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council demanding "urgent" action against Glycel, the company involved. Glycel bosses have hit back, vowing to fight the complaint. Sunday's South China Morning News reported, Glycel claims Professor Barnard signed a contract agreeing to endorse the product. The row is over Glycel's claim that its Swiss-made lotions, containing glycosaminoglycans (GSL) penetrate the skin and repair ageing cells. Brochures banded out at Glycel's Causeway Bay shop carry pictures of a smiling Barnard beside what appears to be a signed endorsement of the product, the report said. Barnard has denied any such endorsement. "At no point did I say that this product is of any value," he said in his written complaint. He said his experiments dealt only with the effect of GSL on living cells. "There is no proof that it has any effect when applied externally to the skin." A Glycel spokesman was quoted saying Prof. Barnard had agreed "a few years ago" that the company could use his name.

Jakarta summons head of election watch for questioning

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian authorities have summoned the head of the country's independent election monitoring committee (KIPP), Gunawan Mohammad, for questioning as a witness in a case of subversion, Mr. Mohammad said Sunday.

"I have received a summons to appear for questioning on Tuesday," Mr. Mohammad told AFP.

Mr. Mohammad said that according to the summons, he would be questioned by officials of the attorney-general's office as a witness in the subversion case against Budiman Sujatmiko and friends.

Mr. Sujatmiko, 27, is the leader of the People's Democratic Party (PRD) who was arrested on Aug. 11 and charged with subversion, which carries a maximum penalty of death.

The government and the military have blamed PRD, which it also accuses of

being a Communist organisation, for violent riots here on July 27 in which officials said four people were killed and 28 were injured.

The National Commission on Human Rights (KIPP), Saturday announced the results of their probe into the riot, saying that five people had died, 74 were injured and 149 were still missing.

Mr. Mohammad said that he received the summons Friday and added that because of other commitments Tuesday, he was planning to ask the attorney-general's office to postpone the questioning until Thursday.

The former editor of Tempo magazine, the country's largest and bestselling weekly publication before it was banned by the government in June 1994, has headed KIPP since its inception in March 1995.

KIPP was set up by some 50 people, including Muslim intellectual Nurcholish

Majid, Legal Aid Foundation (LBH) official Mulyana Kusuma, and Mr. Mohammad.

Since its establishment there have been numerous incidents of KIPP members being harassed by the authorities.

Mr. Mohammad will join the list of human rights activists and political critics of the government who have been questioned by the police or the attorney's general office in relation to the Sujatmiko case.

Among those already or currently being questioned are author Pramudya Ananta Tur, founding President Sukarno's daughter Megawati and Sukmanawati Sukarnoputri, human rights activist Johannes Princen, scores of executives of the opposition Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) and Roman Catholic priest, Sandyawan Sumardi.

Mother Teresa develops lung complication

CALCUTTA (AFP) — Mother Teresa developed complications in her lungs Sunday after a fitful sleep overnight in a hospital here but doctors dismissed the development as minor.

The Woodland Nursing Home, where the 86-year-old Nobel laureate is undergoing treatment since Aug. 20, however, regulated the flow of visitors Sunday to her room saying she did not sleep well during the night.

"Mother Teresa has developed chest complications and the latest X-rays showed a darker patch on her lung," said nursing home director Sudipio Sen, who also heads a six-strong medical team caring for the Roman Catholic nun.

"This pneumonia condition will be monitored, and she will be taken for fresh X-rays later in the evening ... but it is not a serious impediment to her condition," Dr. Sen told reporters.

Doctors also reduced the increasing flow of well-wishers to the nursing home, where Mother Teresa is being treated in an intensive care unit, allowing only nuns from her Missionaries of Charity order to visit her.

Cardiologist Dinomoni Banerjee, one of the members of the medical team, said the visitors were being kept away to allow her to rest.

"She slept a little less last night and that is worrying us," Dr. Banerjee said earlier Sunday.

"We do not want her to be disturbed," he added.

Doctors said Mother Teresa, recovering from life-threatening heart trouble and malarial fever, was also being given oxygen intermittently.

Mandela's romance is out in the open

PRETORIA (AFP) — President Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel, widow of former Mozambican President Samora Machel, are involved in a serious relationship, Mr. Mandela's office said Sunday.

"It's quite serious and everyone that works for the president respects this relationship and we assist in making his life as comfortable as possible," presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said.

He added that while the 78-year-old South African leader has no immediate plans to marry 50-year-old Machel, "he obviously wants the companionship of a close friend."

Rumours of the relationship have been circulating since Mr. Mandela was officially divorced from his former wife Winnie in March, but the president has coyly avoided the subject.

The Sunday Independent newspaper, however, reported that the South African leader is now ready to go public with his love for Mrs. Machel.

Quoting sources close to the president, the newspaper said Mr. Mandela is "smitten with the attractive Mozambican."

"His face lights up at the mention of her name and he enthuses about her at every opportunity," the newspaper said.

It added that Mrs. Machel, who is a popular figure in Mozambique, planned to spend two weeks of every month at Mr. Mandela's home in Johannesburg's

plush Houghton suburb and the rest of the time in her home country.

The weekly said Mr. Mandela was satisfied he had won sufficient public support for his relationship and had briefed leaders of his ruling African National Congress (ANC) to prepare them for a higher public profile.

Mr. Mandela and Mrs. Machel first met in 1990 when Mr. Mandela succeeded late ANC President Oliver Tambo as godfather to Mrs. Machel's seven children.

The couple were seen holding hands when Mr. Mandela paid a state visit to Paris in July and rumours intensified two weeks ago when they were seen kissing at the wedding of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.

Samora Machel, one of Africa's most celebrated liberation leaders, was a close ally of the ANC when the movement was outlawed by the former white minority South African government.

He was killed in October 1986 in an air crash in South Africa, near the Mozambican border.

Since Mr. Mandela divorced Winnie in March, citing her affair with a young lawyer, Graca Machel has been a frequent visitor at the Mandela home, with sources saying that what began as a touching romance has blossomed into a deep love relationship.

The report said Winnie is opposed to the couple marrying, arguing that it will badly affect her daughters Zinzi and Zenuani.

Friends, however, say this has not been a key factor in the couple's decision not to marry.

Mr. Mandela's first marriage ended in 1958 when he left his wife Evelyn to marry Winnie in what was to prove a very difficult relationship.

As an important figure in the anti-apartheid struggle, Mr. Mandela was constantly on the run from police, making ordinary family life impossible.

After being jailed in 1964 for plotting to overthrow the government, his relationship with Winnie was limited to her occasional visits to him in prison and an exchange of tender love letters, which were censored by prison authorities.

On his release from jail in 1990, he tried to resume a relationship which had been badly strained by his imprisonment.

In giving reasons for the breakdown of the marriage in the divorce court, Mandela gave a glimpse into his own private sadness, speaking of his humiliation at her affair with a young lawyer and saying that not once since his release from prison had Winnie entered his bedroom.

Mrs. Machel, much loved in Mozambique, is said to be a private person who is very involved in community work and in the plight of children in Africa, overseeing an office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Pretoria.



Workers carry a victim's body of the Russian airliner that crashed on an Arctic island of Spitzbergen in Norway. Bad weather and tough terrain have made it difficult for rescue teams to recover the frozen and shattered bodies of all the 114 passengers that died on board (Reuter photo)

Russians find voice recorder of doomed plane

LONGYEAR, Norway (R) — Norwegian officials said Sunday the voice recorder of a crashed Russian passenger plane had been found by Russian rescue workers on a mountain top on the Arctic island of Spitzbergen.

The find followed the recovery of the flight recorder in the snow near the Tupolev TU-154's tail section Friday, the day after the plane slammed into the mountainside killing all 141 people on board.

Both boxes were to be flown to Moscow for examination of flight data.

The voice recorder was discovered by two Russian rescue workers who had illegally entered a secure area on the mountain plateau Saturday.

The two, belonging to an 11-member team of mountaineering experts flown in from Moscow, were taken

in for questioning by Norwegian police and only released at midnight.

"They found some passports and also something they said must be the voice recorder," Deputy Spitzbergen Governor Rune Hansen told a news conference. "They marked the recorder with a stone."

Our personnel this morning recovered the voice recorder where the Russians said they had found it."

Ann-Kristin Olsen, governor of the Norwegian Arctic territory, Saturday accused the Russians of breach of trust and of failing to respect that the investigation was headed by Norway.

Mr. Hansen said the men apologised for entering the area alone and explained that they had not deliberately violated Norwegian Authority. They had been flown in by a Russian helicopter to survey the top of

Chechens: Huge task to enforce peace, but independence won

MOSCOW (AFP) — Chechen rebel leaders warned Sunday of the huge task ahead to implement a breakthrough peace accord ending the 20-month conflict in Chechnya, but insisted they had won independence.

Separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, quoted by the Interfax News Agency, said the accord signed early Saturday was "an important step toward peace."

But, he warned, "there is still an enormous amount of work to be done and a difficult struggle against those forces who want to pursue the war."

His reserved comments contrast with the markedly more enthusiastic reaction of other separatist leaders after the accord was signed by Alexander Lebed for Moscow and rebel Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov.

Meanwhile, Khabib-Akhmed Yarikhanov, who led the separatist delegation in the talks much of the time, said the deal confirmed Chechnya's independence and did not put off the issue for five years, as claimed by Moscow.

He said the accord did not contain the word "status," contrary to the text of Gen.

Lebed's draft proposal. Mention of the word "would have been implying doubt on the status, which is not the case," he told AFP.

Instead it confirmed Chechnya's independence. Mr. Yarikhanov added, even though the text said "an accord on bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and Chechen Republic must be found by Dec. 31, 2001."

Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the parliamentary commission on foreign affairs and a member of Gen. Lebed's delegation, admitted Saturday the accord was worded so each side could claim its own version of events.

Chechen rebel Vice-President Said-Khassan Aburismov immediately said then that "for us there is no change, Chechnya remains independent."

Mr. Lukin said, however: "We also consider that their status has been decided, but under our constitution."

Mr. Yandarbiyev, who became separatist leader in April on the death of Dzhokhar Dudayev, warned against "provocations," which he said supporters of a military solution in Chechnya had already begun.

to try to upset the accord.

Speaking to Interfax from an unspecified location in southern Chechnya, he cited as an example the arrest earlier this week of two Chechen journalists in neighbouring Dagestan, which he said was by Russian Special Forces.

The future of Chechnya's Moscow-installed government was also in doubt.

Mr. Yarikhanov said the text of the accord differed from Gen. Lebed's draft in making no mention of the government, most of which fled to Moscow when the peace talks began.

According to Interfax, the government, headed by Dokku Zavgayev, may resign Sunday, obliging Moscow and the separatists to begin delicate talks on how to form a new administration.

Mr. Zavgayev himself however did not appear ready to resign, telling Moscow Echo radio Sunday that he knew nothing about any such move and did not believe it.

Gen. Lebed, Mr. Yeltsin's representative in Chechnya, has said he favours a coalition government for the north Caucasus republic.

The accord is to be studied by the Russian government Monday at a meeting of key ministries presided by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

In the first reaction by Mr. Yeltsin, who is holidaying outside Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky told Interfax Saturday that the deal "is on the whole based" on a plan approved by both president and government, but Mr. Yeltsin wanted further details.

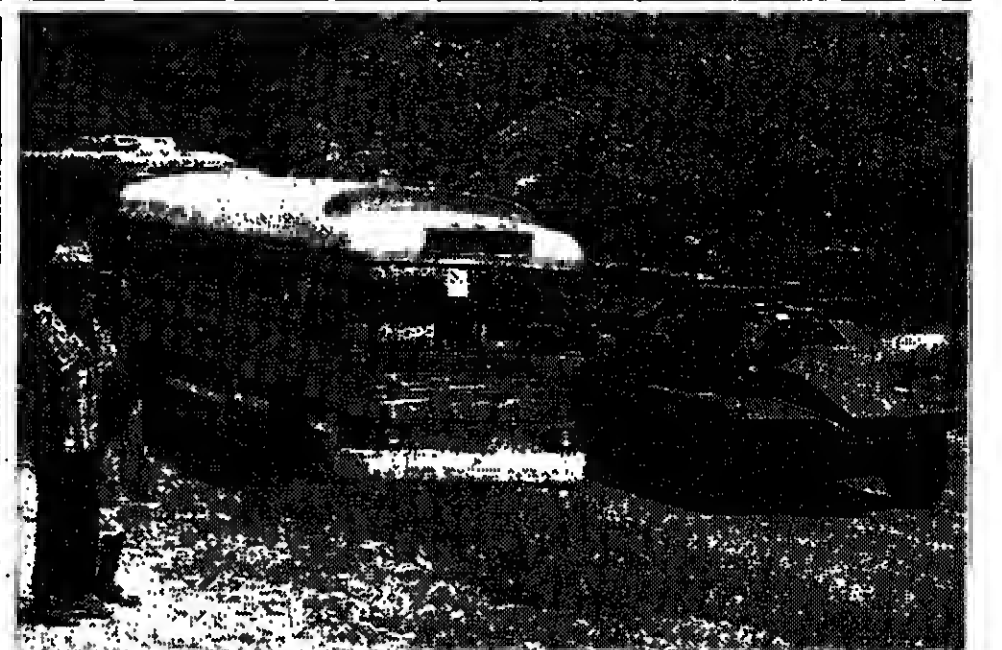
The Russian military command said Saturday the last of its troops had pulled out of the Chechen capital Grozny to bases on the outskirts.

The Chechens recaptured most of Grozny from the Russians in an offensive which began Aug. 6. A ceasefire was reached Aug. 22, setting the current peace process in motion.

The war began in December 1994, when Mr. Yeltsin ordered the armed forces into Chechnya to quell a three-year independence drive. An estimated 40,000 people have died since then and much of Chechnya is in ruins.

Charles said to be committed to Camilla

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles, less than a week after his divorce was finalised, is committed to becoming king with Camilla Parker Bowles, his long-time mistress, at his side, a British newspaper reported Sunday.



An armoured personnel carrier overtakes a bus on a road near Zoquiapa in Guerrero state, Saturday, as patrols searching for traces of the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army) which attacked military installations in six different locations killing 14 people (Reuter photo)

At least one killed in new Mexico clash

MEXICO CITY (R) — At least one suspected leftist rebel was killed and four people arrested Saturday in a new clash with government security forces in the Southern Mexican State of Oaxaca, officials said.

"In the early hours of today members of the Mexican army and state Judicial Police ... clashed with a group of armed people in the municipality of San Mateo Pinas on the Oaxaca Coast," the state government said in a statement.

"One of the members of the aggressor group was killed and four people were arrested."

The joint army-police operation was aimed at arresting those responsible for a wave of attacks by up to 200 members of the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) on the night of Aug. 28 in Oaxaca and several other states, in which at least 14 people died, officials said.

Radio station Radio Red said one policeman was also killed Saturday during an operation against the EPR, but state officials could not confirm the report.

The body of another suspected EPR rebel was found Saturday in a village near the Oaxaca tourist resort of Huanulco. He was thought to have died of wounds sustained in the Aug. 28 attacks, the state government said.

Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo pledged Friday to hunt down the EPR following the wave of attacks, the most serious in Mexico since the Zapatista rebel uprising in 1994.

He called the EPR actions "terrorist."

"Who has given them the right to try to take power by force? That is definitely not acceptable it cannot be tolerated ... The state, acting within the law, will use every available means to bring these people to justice," Mr. Zedillo said in an interview with television network TV Azteca.

Mr. Zedillo promised though that he would not allow security forces to commit human rights abuses in their hunt for the rebels, as they have done in previous attempts to stamp out guerrilla movements.

"I have taken the decision that everything done to prosecute these criminals must be done within the law — without violating individual rights ... and cautiously abiding by judicial procedure," he said.

The rebel group, which officials said Friday had a presence in at least eight Mexican states, have called for a popular revolt against the government.

But Mr. Zedillo, who was due to give his second state of the union address Sunday, said the group had little popular support and was trying to prompt the government into a repressive counter-insurgency campaign that might gain the rebels local support.

"We will not give them that pleasure," he said. "They have no social cause their cause is violence."

Reforma newspaper reported Saturday that the rebels, in a statement released in Huanulco, threatened to carry out further attacks in the tourist resorts of Acapulco, in neighbouring Guerrero State, and in Cancun, in the Yucatan Peninsula.

The report could not be independently confirmed.

The White House Friday strongly condemned the rebel violence, but the U.S. State Department said it saw no threat to Mexican political or economic stability.

Mexican officials said security measures had been stepped up for Mr. Zedillo's state of the nation address and at oil and gas installations, telecommunications facilities and roads across the country.

Hurricane tracks toward northeastern U.S. states

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Hurricane Edouard churned northward Sunday off the U.S. eastern seaboard, sending pounding waves along the coast and threatening beachgoers during the three-day, summer-end Labour Day weekend.

Hurricane watches were extended northward from Cape Charles, Virginia, to Merrimack River, Massachusetts, the U.S. National Weather Service office in Miami, Florida, reported in its 11 p.m. (0300 GMT) update.

The massive storm swirled at sea with sustained winds of 185 kilometres per hour. The eye of the storm was some 720 kilometres south-southeast of Long Island, New York, moving north at 25 kilometres per hour, the service said.

"If Edouard does not turn away from the coast ... Hurricane conditions could arrive at the coast early Monday morning," the weather service said.

"Large swells are expected along portions of the U.S. east coast over the next day or two in association with hurricane Edouard," the service added.

The storm's direction means it could hit Long Island or even parts of New England, although meteorologists remained uncertain about its movement.

"If it keeps moving, the threat will be somewhere in New England," said Ken Reeves, a meteorologist.

Meanwhile, beachgoers along much of the mid-Atlantic coast were told to avoid swimming in waters above the knee level to avoid dangerous tides. Surfing was permitted in some areas. In New Jersey, beach patrols warned bathers to be careful, restricting some beaches and closing others. But surfers cast caution —

and themselves — to the waves.

"This is the best surf of the summer, no doubt," said Matthew North, 24, as he and his wife, Christine, struggled into their wetsuits at Cape May, New Jersey.

"There's a lot of water out there. For surfing, this is really what you need."

CNN Television reported two people had drowned in the waters off New Jersey and a third suffered a broken neck.

In addition, salvage operations of the wreckage of TWA Flight 800 off the coast of Long Island were suspended as the storm approached the north. CNN reported.

In the Atlantic, observers were watching 3.5-metre (12-foot) seas, with waves up to two metres (seven feet) on beaches in North Carolina.

The storm comes as millions of Americans had

flocked to the beaches for the holiday weekend, which traditionally marks the end of the summer tourist season.

Weather forecasters, meanwhile, upgraded tropical storm Fran to hurricane Fran. As of 0300 GMT that storm system was located 530 kilometres northeast of San Juan, Puerto Rico. It had maximum sustained winds of 120 kilometres an hour.

Fran was moving northwest at 11 kilometres per hour.

Tropical storm Gustav was following Fran, with Gustav's centre located 1,750 kilometres east of the lesser antilles.

The storm featured maximum sustained winds of 65 kilometres per hour and was moving west-northwest at 22 kilometres an hour.

Gustav's motion was expected to continue through Sunday.

First shots fired in N. Zealand election campaign

WELLINGTON (R) — The radical right and their counterparts on the left fired the first formal shots in New Zealand's election campaign Sunday in a poll that will give voters more diverse choices than ever before.

Campaigning began as a new opinion poll by TV1 showed support for the ruling Conservative National Party falling four points to 35 per cent, its lowest level for six months.

New Zealanders go to the polls on Oct. 12 in their first election under a German-style mixed proportional system that has replaced the British-style, first-past-the-post system.

The right-wing Association of Consumers and Taxpayers (ACT) was the first of more than 20 parties to formally launch its campaign with a platform of cutting government to the bone and eventually abolishing income tax.

Despite heavy financial backing from big business, ACT has only made a moderate impact on the polls, with support in the TV1 poll registered at 4.6 per cent.

The big winner in the poll was Labour, up five points to 19 per cent from a record low of 14 per cent, while the economic nationalist New Zealand first was steady on 20 per cent.

According to the TV1 poll, if those trends held in the polling booths, National would win 47 seats, NZ First 26, Labour 25, the Alliance 15 and the Christian Coalition seven, giving the most likely grouping of NZ First, Labour and the Alliance a slight majority to rule.

Parties need at least five per cent support before they win seats in the 120-seat parliament.

The poll showed support for the Alliance, a formal grouping of five parties, falling by one point to 12 per cent, less than half that of earlier polls.

Leader Jim Anderton opened the Alliance campaign in

an Auckland movie theatre currently screening Mission:Impossible.

The packed theatre was roused by Pacific island drummers and dancers in a multi-cultural theme, before Mr. Anderton was led in to the tune of the film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

"We have to restore to New Zealanders trust in the political process and in their political leadership," he said.

The alliance will campaign to reverse New Zealand's radical economic reforms of the last 12 years, brought in under the National Party and earlier under the Labour Party.

Mr. Anderton argues those parties broke faith with the electorate by introducing reforms without campaigning on them.

He promised the Alliance will not coalesce with other parties unless there is a pre-election agreement, something others won't agree to and which may serve to keep the Alliance out of government.

Polls show education and health concern New Zealanders most and Mr. Anderton promised to rescind user-pay programmes in favour of raising taxes for the wealthy and middle class.

"Let them pay for their education through a progressive tax system after they get it, not have a heap of debt all through their lives while they are getting it for God's sake," he said.

Financial markets have shown few pre-election jitters, and Sunday's poll has given some fresh comfort despite National's falling support. As well as ACT nearing the five per cent threshold, National's other natural partner of government, the Christian Coalition, registered 5.4 per cent support.

Sri Lanka seeks foreign help to fight terrorism; Britain condemns Tigers

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka asked for foreign help to fight terrorism as British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind left here Sunday after condemning the island's separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said only "joint action" would be effective against terrorism "whether such acts were in Atlanta, in Manchester, in Tokyo or in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo."

Mr. Kadirgamar in a banquet speech in honour of Mr. Rifkind said Britain's initiative to prevent the abuse of asylum and the sharing of expertise and information was keenly watched by Sri Lanka which is plagued by violence.

"Our government is looking forward to exchanging views with your government on these valuable ideas," said Mr. Kadirgamar, a member

of Sri Lanka's minority Tamil community.

"We cannot yield to terrorism," Mr. Kadirgamar said. "Terrorism cannot be justified by any political objective."

Mr. Rifkind, who arrived here Saturday on a brief visit as part of a five-nation Asian tour, accused the island's dominant Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of staging terrorist attacks.

Jordan Times

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Framework for picture up north

THE VISIT of Tansu Ciller, the Turkish foreign minister, to Amman on Tuesday will be a timely opportunity for leaders of two important states contiguous to Iraq to discuss the situation there following the advance of Iraqi army units in Kurdish-held territories. Jordan and Turkey should be interested in every development that could determine the outcome of the new situation since it would not only affect trade and oil routes and flows but also the stability and security of the region as a whole.

While it is too early to tell what the latest developments in northern Iraq effectively mean to the shape and future of the region as a whole, there are basic principles that should guide both Turkey's and Jordan's, as well as other countries', policies on the situation there.

First and foremost among those should be total agreement on the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq. Iran is, in theory at least, in support of this goal. But Tehran cannot provide evidence of it while it backs one Kurdish faction over another and uses troops to that end inside Iraqi territory. The real reason behind sending the Iraqi army into Erbil, the Baghdad regime says, is exactly to prevent Iran from using Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan to threaten Iraqi oil, trade and territorial interests.

Secondly, just as Turkey has every right to strike whatever economic deals it wants with Iran, Tehran cannot use its improving relations with Ankara to dictate to Iraq or any other country in the region terms of economic and political engagement. Jordan — which stands to benefit or lose, economically speaking, from any Iraqi decision to use or not to use Turkish or Jordanian or even Syrian routes for its imports and exports — has always taken and will continue to take a principled stand in dealing with other states in the Middle East, regardless of the immediate material concerns. True, Jordan has called for political change in Iraq, one that is geared towards granting the Iraqis their democratic and human rights, but this country has also always insisted on respecting the sovereignty and independence of Iraq, just as it has insisted on opening all doors for genuine regional cooperation among all states as a way to defuse tensions and solve crisis.

It is in this wider context of events that have taken place most recently (starting with the agreement to implement Security Council Resolution 986, through the formation of the Erbakan government and his visit to Tehran to the latest incursions by Iran in northern Iraq) that the latest action by Baghdad has to be understood. With this in mind, political sideshows and threats to use force and retaliation have to be either seen in their proper perspective or cut down to size — at least for now.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the situation in northern Iraq, a writer for Al Ra'i Sunday said that the Kurds whose leaders are in internal power struggle are the victims of the war which has lasted for years and caused unnecessary sufferings. Mahmoud Khatami noted that while the leaders of one faction have been seeking help from Tehran to subdue their adversaries, the Iranian leaders are exploiting the situation and trying to have a foothold in northern Iraq and dominate the Kurds. In the light of these developments the Baghdad government may by no means remain passive and has no alternative but to make speedy moves to restore stability and end the internal conflict among the warring Kurdish factions, said the writer. Iraq has the right to seek all possible venues to ensure its sovereignty in northern Iraq and protect its territorial integrity in that volatile region; and therefore its moves to deal with the situation should be legitimate and aimed at halting further conflicts which are mainly harming the Kurds themselves, said the writer. He expressed hope that the current development would not further delay the oil-for-food agreement concluded by the Iraqi government and the U.N. Security Council because more delays are bound to cause further sufferings for the Iraqi people including the Kurds in the north.

THE GENERAL strike observed by the Palestinians in the occupied lands Friday and the Palestinian leader's call on Muslims to converge on Jerusalem to pray at the holy shrines constitute the first step taken by the Palestinian leadership in response to Israel's moves to build more settlements on confiscated Arab territory, said Ahmad Mischeh, a writer for Al Ra'i. These moves are understandable and came as an initial natural reaction and an expression of anger (as is the Israeli government's disregard of the Oslo agreements which call for the redeployment of Israelis in Hebron) and to counter Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's adamant stand with regard to the Jewish settlements issue, said the writer. By closing Jerusalem before worshippers, the Israeli government has proved that it will not guarantee freedom of worship in the Holy City as it has been bragging about all along, and prove that it is going ahead with plans to Judaize the city and drive Arab and Islamic characters from the city, continued the writer. He said while the Palestinians were hoping to see Jerusalem serving as a symbol of co-existence between the followers of the monotheistic religions, the Israeli government has proved to be seeking all avenues leading to the destruction of the peace process with their neighbours.

Economic Review

From GATT to WTO:
Is the world better off now?

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

FOR FIFTY years the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) moved along slowly, and despite the grumbles of many who at times accused it of being nothing but a "rich country (as in nation) club", the GATT managed to lower tariffs, reduce trade barriers, encourage trade and commerce (trade in goods increased by over 14 folds in the past 45 years) and stimulate global growth through enhancing competition in the world of international trade. But now that it has been replaced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and since the WTO has been active for over a year now, one ponders whether the world is better off with the successor or not.

Early in its life, the WTO saw itself buried in a power struggle, as it tried first to select members for, of all things, the Dispute Settlement Board, an appellate body for trade disputes (the panel which has the final say within the WTO on trade disputes). The European Union (EU) and the United States, the two great forces in world trade, tried to have two seats each, out of the seven seats on the panel. Having the EU and U.S. dominate such a panel, would not be appropriate because, the two entities are involved in most of the disputes (the U.S. was involved in 10 of the 21 disputes presented to the WTO in 1995). So, last fall a compromise was reached when the U.S. and EU agreed to one seat each. Of course, many of the countries, particularly ones with developing or emerging economies, which have recently joined the WTO in order to secure some say in trade negotiations, have already started to ponder the hopelessness of their plight: The insignificance of their voices.

Among the achievements of the WTO was the creation of a dispute settlement mechanism which was put to the test in 1995 with the following results: Out of the 21 disputes presented to the Dispute Settlement Board none was

resolved; last year's automobile trade dispute between the U.S. and Japan was not resolved within the WTO which brings to doubt if the "rich and famous" will ever be subject to the rules they set for the "poor and obscure"; the talks over admitting Russia and China on for a very long time and the decisions on their accession to the WTO, to my knowledge, are yet to be made; and negotiations on telecommunications, financial services, and audiovisual goods are still in progress. (The U.S. which has the world's most liberalised telecommunications market wants all of the 120 members of the WTO to follow suit, which would give U.S. giants such as AT&T free access to the whole world; and of course it will dominate any market it chooses to enter).

A major cause for concern that faces the infant WTO is maintaining credibility while at the same time garnering the support of the U.S. One easily recalls how the U.S. killed the International Trade Organisation (ITO), a sister organisation to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which grew out of the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, by refusing to support it. The ITO was aborted when the U.S. Congress refused to ratify its charter on the grounds that the ITO gives the federal government powers that infringe on the powers of the individual powers of the individual states (the only nation that had signed the charter of the ITO was Australia). Thus, the world became privy to how the mighty can cause others to fall.

In the Japan-U.S. automobile trade dispute, the WTO was at a vortex that could have threatened either its existence or its credibility: Ruling for the U.S. would have made Japan, the world's second largest economy, practically an outlaw; and siding with Japan would have made the opinion of the American public, which seems to want

to blame the rest of the world for its problems, so anti-WTO that any support from the Clinton administration would have been totally lost. Luckily, the issue was solved by the Japanese backing down again, for what seems the umpteenth millionth time. The Japanese chose to save America's face, not theirs, in order to avoid losing their largest importer. (At a seminar at the University of Jordan during Japan Week which took place in June, I asked a senior Japanese economic advisor about this particular action by his government, and he responded that it is better to lose a little face than partake in a trade war with the world's largest economy.)

So is the world better off now that we have a WTO instead of a GATT? The answer is the affirmative because while the WTO is not so perfect and not an all-too-powerful when it comes to the big countries, it does have certain advantages over the GATT. The WTO is a U.N. sanctioned organisation, just like the IMF and the World Bank, while the GATT was an agreement that operated loosely as an organisation; the WTO deals with disputes in trade in services while the GATT only dealt with trade in goods; the WTO addresses intellectual property rights and the environment, issues which were only slightly tackled by the GATT; the WTO is liberalising trade in woven materials and clothes, thus it is dismantling the Multi Fiber Agreement which the GATT could not even touch; and the WTO is addressing barriers to trade in agricultural products which was not sufficiently handled by the GATT. Therefore, the breadbif of the involvement of the WTO makes the world better off with it than with the GATT. However, the small economies like Jordan will always have to remember that the big guys are not always fair and because they are big, they can always bend the rules of the game, if not the whole game.

Generation
and other gaps

By Abba Eban

IT DID not take me long in Gaza to understand that there is such a thing as the Fourth World. The poverty, the raging unemployment, the water and food shortages, the unsmiling faces in the streets, the perplexity of the Palestinian leadership, do not bring any joy to us who were the ruling power by national consensus for nearly 30 years.

The Netanyahu administration has never explained why it humiliates the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) by ignoring its leader and sending Israeli settlers to fragment its areas of residence. Two million Palestinians, justly described by President Ezer Weizman as "Israel's neighbours," feel that their interests raise no echo with the new Israeli government.

It was a prodigious achievement by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres to secure an alliance with the Palestinian mainstream for the suppression of Hamas aggression. Why the Netanyahu administration does not cultivate this achievement is a mystery which no one has solved.

Without the initiative of the PLO in inaugurating the peace process, there would have been no treaty with Jordan and no opening to the rest of the Arab World. At the height of the peace process, 15 Arab foreign ministers came to Sham al Sheikh to support Israeli morale which was shattered by the suicide bombings. The interaction of Israeli and Palestinian interests is the heart of the peace process.

Israeli opinion has never come fully face to face with the question of who the leaders of the Palestinian nation are. This is not the same as who they once were. They are the joint authors of a Declaration of Principles that electrified the world when it was promulgated exactly three years ago in a scenario of maximal international commitment.

The declaration stated that "the PLO recognises the right of the state of Israel to exist in peace and security, accepts U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, commits itself to the Middle East peace process and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides."

No historian worthy of his reputation would refuse to acknowledge that this was a revolutionary statement in its time. It signified an overwhelming ideological victory for Zionism in the context of its most crucial relationship. Yet on May 30, slightly more than half of the Zionist world pretended that these words had never been uttered, and proceeded as if a revolution of thought and expression in the Palestinian community had never occurred.

There has now been an Israeli regression to the old era when the slogan "the whole world is against us" expressed the Israeli mood.

Within six weeks Egypt has threatened to cancel a conclave that will continue the achievements of the Casablanca and Amman conferences. Qatar and Oman are having second thoughts. Morocco is closing its doors and ears; the expected expansion of the Israeli flag into the Gulf and North Africa is frozen; and a Syrian negotiation will only become possible when, if ever, an Israeli government decides to define the boundary between Israel and Syria — as a peace treaty invariably does.

In the present conditions a Syrian-Israeli negotiation is unlikely to begin, let alone achieve a result.

My impression of Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas and Nabil Shaath is that they are pragmatic people who are looking for diplomacy, not for violence. They are conscious of being Israel's partners in the anti-terrorist cause. They are exposed to grave hazards in that cause. They know that this sensational evolution of their anti-terrorist attitude is attested by Israel's security authorities.

They are told everyday that Israel has a hierarchical structure. So do the Palestinians. Why then, they ask, does the head of the Israeli pyramid not deal directly with the head of the Palestinian pyramid?

The Palestinian judgement is that a summit encounter is needed not just for reasons of protocol, but simply to get things moving. Anyone who has sat with Arafat and his associates comes away with the lucid understanding that it is the rais who makes the decisions.

The Palestinian leaders know that in a world where F.W. de Klerk talks to Nelson Mandela, the Irish and British representatives legitimise the IRA, the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia meet with one another on the basis of the Dayton agreement and where Arafat has been a moving spirit in a discourse with Rabin, Peres, and the entire Israeli gallery, a prudish disdain of the elected Palestinian leader has colonial implications. It is alien to the Oslo accords, which the new Israeli government wisely promised to fulfill.

President Weizman, who has virtually compelled the prime minister to receive Arafat, may or may not have "extended his powers," but he emerges as much more modern in temperament, policy and style than the much younger Netanyahu. The generation gap seems to have gone the wrong way.

The writer is a former foreign minister of Israel. The article is reprinted from the Jerusalem Post.

Seoul's path to a civil society:
How far along?

By Don Oberdorfer

WASHINGTON — The conviction and sentencing of South Korea's two most recent former presidents, one to death and the other to a long prison term, is a milestone along that country's path to the rule of law and a civil society. The problem is that nobody can tell whether it is an early milestone or one near the end of the road.

The rulings of judges in the case of former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, both former generals and formerly fast friends, were more of a shock to the rest of the world than the people of Korea. For them, the shock came late last year when Mr. Roh admitted to having amassed a huge, illegal political fund, much of which he took with him when he left his high office, and when Mr. Chun's illegal funds were subsequently found stacked in apple boxes.

The real turning point came in the wake of Mr. Roh's revelation, when President Kim Young Sam abruptly reversed his earlier stand that transgressions of his military predecessors should be left to "the judgement of history" rather than the contemporary judgements of the courts. Once President Kim had thrown the two former presidents to the wolves, or more precisely to the energised and newly empowered public prosecutors, the outcome was

inevitable. Only the details of the sentences were in doubt.

The doubts persist because it is highly unlikely that the sentences will be carried out. Outside of some family members and friends of murdered dissidents, there is little taste for the blood of former presidents among the Koreans and not much for decades-long prison terms. To be plunged from the power and majesty of the Blue House, the South Korean version of the White House, to the obloquy of being condemned, powerless and in prisoners' garb before the courts is a loss of face almost beyond comprehension in a society where esteem is all-important.

In deciding whether, when and how to exercise clemency, President Kim must take into account its own fortunes during the remaining one-and-a-half-years of his incumbency and in his own post-presidential life. He owes much to Mr. Roh for swinging back toward democratic rule and for bringing Mr. Kim into the ruling coalition, and much to the Chun-Roh wing of the current ruling party and to the provincial region from which the former president came. In the half-century history of the South Korean republic, presidents have almost all suffered when their power ebbed, being either exiled, assassinated, persecuted or

in this case jailed. Kim Young Sam must be mindful that the next president could rewrite the rules of the game, just as he has done.

The convictions and sentences are an indeterminate milestone for just this reason. The prosecutors and the courts are not now immune to influence or divorced from politics, though this week's result may help them and the Korean people to decide they should be. If the money-in-politics link can truly be broken — as the military-in-politics link seems to have been broken irrevocably — then the rule of law will be more certain than it is today. It is instructive that former military colleagues of Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh were kept behind bars after being convicted in court Monday, while most of the economic operatives and industrialists convicted of receiving or giving bribes were permitted to return to their homes and offices.

Perhaps the greatest importance of last week's events is to demonstrate that the gap may be closing between the country's economic maturity and its political immaturity. Economically, this half of a divided peninsula has become a powerhouse, with a per capita income of more than \$10,000 and a bid to soon join the OECD. Politically it has lagged behind, partly because of the enormous power of its presidents as leaders of a

Confucian society and the great power of the economic conglomerates known as chaebols that presidential power helped to create and nourish. Together they comprise the system that Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh are convicted of abusing.

Another reason for the political lag has been the need for a large and powerful army to confront the even larger hostile army of North Korea across the narrow strip of the Demilitarised Zone. Now the North Korea military threat is diminishing, and the South is worried more about the consequences of a potential collapse than of an attack. This accounts in part for the willingness of Korean society to humble its former military leaders.

In this week's court actions, the political system and the military were subjected to the rule of law. Now we will see how far Koreans will take the rule of law in controversies to come, and how far the rule of law will take Korea.

Don Oberdorfer, a former Washington Post diplomatic correspondent, is journalist-in-residence in the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University's Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. He contributed this column to the International Herald Tribune.

History of the Department of Antiquities

By Dr. Maan Abu Nowar

THE GERMAN scholar, Jasper Seetzen, was the first European to rediscover Jerash in the territory east of the River Jordan in 1806. He was so impressed by what he saw that he wrote in his famous diary: "I had the satisfaction of seeing the important ruins of Jerash... It is impossible to explain how this place, formally of such manifest celebrity, can have so long escaped the notice of all lovers of antiquities." Six years later, more specifically on May 2, 1812, John Lewis Burckhardt visited Jerash and then travelled to Amman, Kerak and Wadi Musa, where in August he rediscovered Petra. "A rose red city half as old as time," these two rediscoveries encouraged many scholars and travellers to visit these ancient cities; prominent among them were:

James Silk Buckingham (1816), Commander C. L. Iby and Mr. J. Mangles (1818), Le Marquis and Leon de Laborde (1826), the Reverend Edward Robinson (1836), David Roberts (1839), Henry Layard (1840), Harriet Martineau (1847), Charles M. Doughty (1876), Princes Albert and George, sons of the Prince of Wales, Edward VIII (1882), Alios Musil (1896), R. E. Brunnow and Von Domszewski (1910) and G. Dalman (1911).

By 1860, reports by scholars and travellers who visited Petra and Jerash, stimulated great interest in these cities in America and Europe. Charitable and religious societies were established for exploration: The Palestine Exploration Fund was founded in London during 1865; the American Exploration Society followed in 1870; the German Orient Company; the French Biblical School and others were established towards the end of the 19th century.

Although the will of nature prevented Jordan from being the richest country in antiquities, it remained until this day one of the richest, in spite of nine major and destructive earthquakes which shook its territory. Those of 31 B.C., 638 A.D., 746, 854, 1034, 1546, 1834, and 1837, caused much damage. Particularly the effects of some of these earthquakes on Jerash were devastating. According to Lankester-Harding: "The Forum and the main street were completely buried under debris, the great propylaea of Artemis Temple was dilapidated and tottering." The castles at

Amman, Kerak, Rabadh, Amrah, Iraq Al Amir, the amphitheatre in Amman, Um Qais and many other sites suffered great damage as well.

The twenties

When the emirate of Trans-Jordan was established by Emir Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein in 1921, the government paid little attention to antiquities, for they were occupied with the priority of law and order and the establishment of vital national institutions. In 1923, the independence of Trans-Jordan was assured by the British government, and the country became peaceful and stable. Then the Emir started to show some interest in antiquities, and commanded the government to clear the debris from the amphitheatre in Amman, and appoint guards to protect the antiquities at Jerash. The Emir's interest was further stimulated by his visit to Petra, where he saw the need for the protection and preservation of antiquities. However, because Petra was under the jurisdiction of his father, King Hussein Ibn Ali of the Hijaz, he was unable to take action there.

Further interest in antiquities was created by the "Basilica Affair" which caused the main divergence between the Emir and St. John Philby, the British representative in Trans-Jordan.

On June 4, 1923, Philby protested strongly against the demolition of a wall, thought by him to be a part of a Byzantine basilica, which was obstructing the building of the new mosque of Amman, the present Al Hussein Mosque at the heart of the city. The government responded by stopping the demolition, but on orders from the Emir they restarted it on June 13, and by June 16 the wall was nearly levelled to the ground. After some discussions between Muhammad Al Unsi and Philby, the Emir expressed his anger at Philby's attitude, commented on the religious aspect of the issue and rejected Philby's protest on the grounds that the basilica was demolished because of the requirement of the mosque. The Emir ignored Philby and informed the high commissioner for Palestine of the attention paid by the government to the amphitheatre in Amman and assured him: "I cannot accept any interference in regard of religious buildings that belong to any communities under any control. I therefore protest against this

interference which is undesirable to me as well as to all Muslims."

The high commissioner asked Professor John Garstang from the British School of Archaeology in Palestine to report on the issue. His report included the fact that the wall in front of the mosque being rebuilt was "fortunately of relatively small interest archaeologically owing to the fact that it has already been largely remodelled and reconstructed at various times so that its original interest and appearance are no longer maintained."

The law of the Department of Antiquities was promulgated the same year.

During 1924, with a budget of only 305 Egyptian pounds, the department could only afford to protect the ancient city of Jerash against encroachment and damage to its monuments by the local population and to continue to conserve the amphitheatre in Amman. The prime minister issued an ordinance on July 5, 1924 charging all sheikhs and mukhtars of villages of the obligation and responsibility for the protection of antiquities within their areas, and to report to the government any damage against antiquities. He prohibited the removal of any stones from any site and warned offenders against contraventions.

There was a substantial increase in the budget of antiquities in 1925: 4,369 Egyptian pounds were allocated, and the department was able to expand its conservation works to Jerash and Kerak. A competent engineer was appointed and charged with the conservation works under the supervision of Professor George Horsfield of the Palestine Department of Antiquities and Professor John Garstang of the British School of Archaeology. In Jerash, temporary measures were carried out to remove the danger of the collapse of all structures and monuments. In Kerak, the Crusader Castle which developed many serious faults was undergoing reinforcement. Particularly Garstang, who acted as adviser to the department in archaeological matters, was active in visiting and scheduling most known sites in the country. Thus so much interest in antiquities was created that the Emir commanded the government to build a small museum in Jerash during that year.

In July 1925, a new Law of Antiquities was promulgated. It provided that antiquities mean: "Any structure or

any art object made by human effort before the year 1700." It made reporting finds of antiquities by any person to the government obligatory within seven days; it gave the government the authority to take measures to locate and protect antiquities and their sites; and it described violations of the law and prescribed punishments against offenders.

By 1926, with the accession of the District of Maan from Hijaz to Trans-Jordan, Petra was included in the department's jurisdiction. The department's budget was increased to 5,869 Egyptian pounds to cover the new site, and organised visits by the department's tourist section to Petra were carried out. Professors Garstang and Horsfield were able to visit and schedule the famous site for the first time in its history. At Jerash the central colonnade street was cleared of debris. Those portions in danger of collapse in the west side of the South Theatre, the galleries of the North Theatre, the great gateway to the Central Temple and other monuments and columns were finally consolidated under the careful supervision of Garstang and Horsfield, and the Crusader Castle at Kerak was buttressed against collapse.

The department's budget was reduced to 5,328 Palestinian pounds (PP) in 1927. While conservation continued in Jerash, the department, at the Emir's command, restarted to conserve Rabadh Castle in Ajloun and the mosque and tomb of the Muslim martyr of Mu'tah, Ja'far (Al Tayar) Ibn Abu Talib, near Kerak. The Amman Museum was established and a small inscription gallery was built and opened to the public in Jerash. The Missions Scientifiques Italiennes en Orient excavated a part of the Amman Acropolis. There was no serious damage caused to antiquities by the earthquake of July 11, 1927, although Jerash, Rabadh, and Iraq Al Amir were affected.

The department budget was reduced by more than half in 1928, to PP 2,132. This was because of the bad year (mahl) for agriculture, and because money was needed for other more important sectors of the administration. However, in Jerash Yale University and the British School of Archaeology joint expedition relieved the department of some expenditure as they cleared the St. Theodore Church court to the east and

west. The department was able to conserve and carefully rebuild the gateway and retaining walls of the stairway to the Temple of Artemis. It also cleared the part of the street from the Nymphaeum to the museum. In Ajloun, Rabadh Castle was buttressed, the entrance wall was reconditioned, and the western tower was cleared.

During 1929 and 1930, the department continued to carry out conservation works in Amman, Kerak, Jerash and Ajloun. A small expedition was formed by Yale University and the British School of Archaeology to excavate few sites in 1929, and the American Expedition carried out excavations in the area of South Tebrakionia in 1930.

Professor George Horsfield was so interested in the antiquities of Jordan, that he accepted the post of the Chief Curator of Antiquities, as well as adviser to the government in 1930. His services which followed were much appreciated.

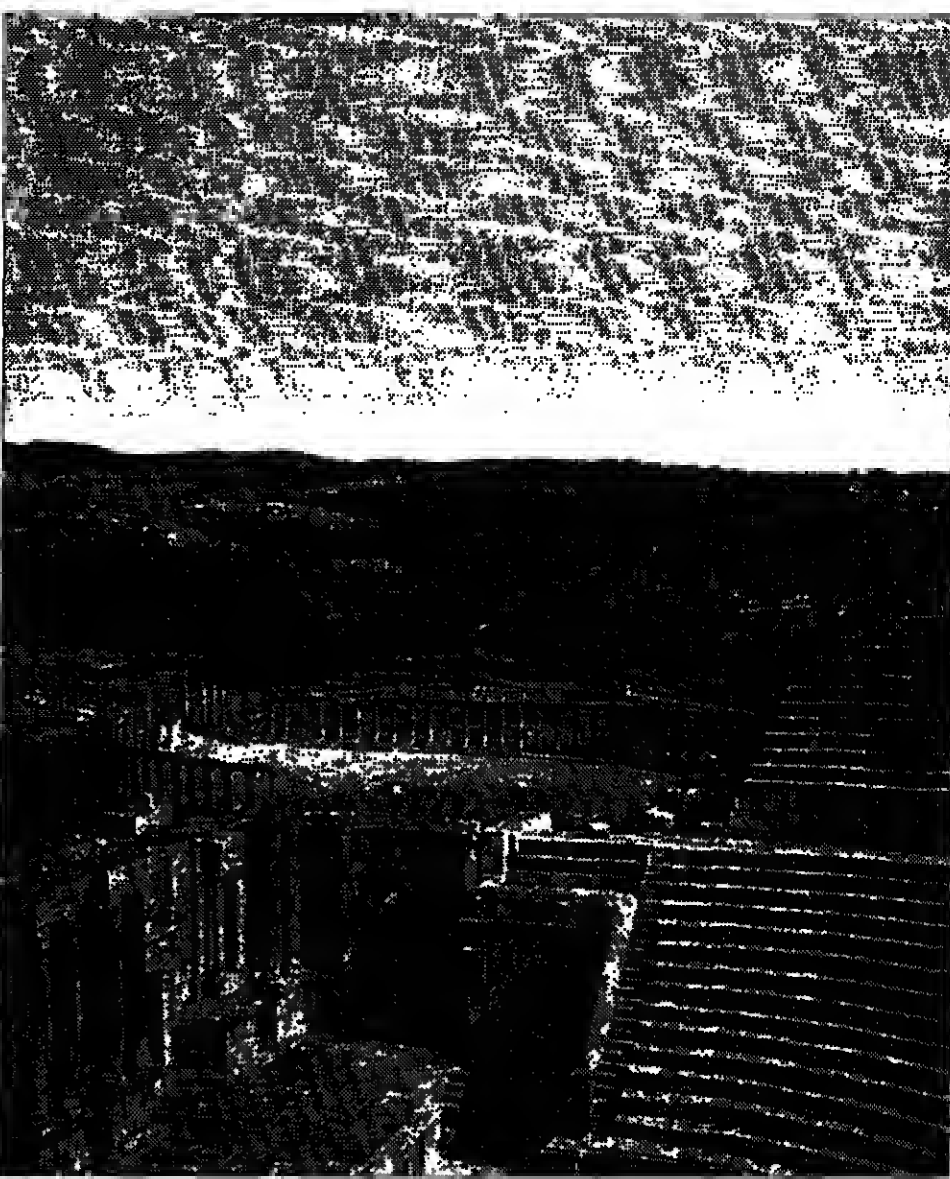
The thirties

The department budget was at its lowest during the thirties as can be seen from the following list of its annual expenditure:

Year	Palestinian pound
1931	2,610
1932	2,630
1933	2,642
1934	2,500
1935	2,558
1936	2,389
1937	2,676
1938	2,590
1939	2,500

This was due to the fact that until 1934 the American Expedition and the British School of Archaeology had covered their expenses during their work in Jerash and that very little work was undertaken during the Palestine revolt 1936-1939. Most of the finds by excavations were catalogued, banded and displayed, and properly cared for in the Palestine Museum in Jerusalem, where they were held in trust under the title and name of the Trans-Jordan government.

During 1933-35 the American School of Oriental Research continued to carry out excavations at Jerash, and the British School of Archaeology continued to provide advisors and experts to assist the department. However, towards the end of 1936, the Antiquities Law of 1935 was promulgated to replace the law of 1925. The



Despite suffering great damages as a result of several devastating earthquakes, the Greco-Roman city of Jerash remains one of Jordan's most significant archaeological site (file photo)

new law provided that: "Antiquities means any building or object made by man before 1700, be it above ground or below ground, transferable or non-transferable, and includes the remains of any man or any animal before A.D. 600. It also provided that "Antiquities means especially any building or museum or remains or things which has any relation to or constitute evidence in any way on history, religion, culture, custom, art, knowledge or industry." It declared that: "All antiquities discovered after the twenty-fourth day of July 1922 belonged to the government of Trans-Jordan, and that no person or public institution or any foreign government be allowed to dispose with it." The law also provided for the duties and functions of the department and its director. It regulated excavations and discovery, and the purchase or acquisition of land of or for antiquities, digs and trading.

During the same year, the Franciscan Bible School of the Flagellation of Jerusalem started conservation works on the Monastic buildings and the outside walls of the church at Siyaghah, near Madaba. Some of the finest known mosaics in the world were found in the church.

The first ever volume of a survey of Trans-Jordan's antiquities was published by Dr. Nelson Glueck as the annual of the American School of Oriental Research. Professor George Horsfield retired on April 1, 1936, and was replaced by G. W. Lankester Harding as Chief Curator of Antiquities on August 1, 1936. In his "faithful" Ford V. 8, bought new in 1936, which was still going strong in 1956, Lankester-Harding visited most parts of the country and found that the amount of encroachment and damage to antiquity sites was very small. He noticed that the promptness of officials in taking action whenever a case was reported had greatly discouraged offenders.

During 1936, a private donation enabled the department to clear the Royal Tombs, the Tomb of the Roman governor, and to complete the excavation of the oldest high place in Petra. A royal inscription lost for thirty years was rediscovered and many loose pieces of sculpture were brought together and hurried for protection.

Pere Robert Koppel, of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem, carried out an excavation at Tilaal Al Ghussul in the Jordan Valley, during that year, as well as during 1937. Dr. Glueck of the American School completed a first season of work at Tell Al Khalaifah. His excavation revealed that the site was an important centre for smelting and refining copper. He also began his survey in the district of Irbid in 1937. In 1938 he continued his investigations and research in Amman and the district of Balqa.

During 1938, conservation works continued by the department in Jerash; the Forum was almost completely cleared of debris, and in other areas of the ancient city much clearing, restoration, and repair was carried out, and the mosaic floor of the Church of SS. Cosmos and Damian was completely lifted, repaired and relaid.

In spite of the limited financial support allocated to the Department of Antiquities between 1921-1938, its achievement constitute a success story. Cooperation between foreign and Jordanian officials was excellent, and thanks to the Emir and the Arab Legion, the safety, freedom to travel and work in peace by foreign teams and scholars was never interrupted.

His fight to fly his helicopter between the West Bank and Gaza became a symbol of his dignity, no less than an indispensable vehicle of exercising legitimacy for his rule in the West Bank and not just at his headquarters in Gaza.

For his part, Netanyahu has been concerned about two external events. First, there is the scheduled meeting Thursday in Washington of more than two donor countries which could have turned into a "blame Israel" session, as Palestinians are complaining that a \$90 million deficit for 1996 was due to Israel's closure of the territories.

Western diplomats have speculated that the lack of discernable movement on the peace process combined with any refusal by the donors to provide more funding to the PNA, would lead Egypt to cancel the regional economic summit planned for Cairo in November, and pin the blame on Netanyahu's refusal to move forward on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

This change was bound to be echoed by Shimon Peres, the driving force behind the regional economic summits, which began with the conference in Casablanca in 1994.

Baghdad announces withdrawal

(Continued from page 1)

"We have warned him that if he took that kind of action there will be consequences," he said.

U.S. defence officials in Washington said more than 300 U.S. planes and 20 warships were immediately available.

But Iraq warned the United States to stay out.

"The Iraqi people, in the forefront Iraqi Kurds, are ready to provide an example that will inevitably remind the Americans of the Vietnam complex," the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya declared in a front-page editorial.

In Ankara, Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller declared: "Saddam must withdraw immediately."

Iran's parliament speaker Ali Nateq Nouri told parliament on Sunday the attack on Erbil "has been definitely carried out in coordination with and a green light from Washington."

Iraq has not commented on allegations by KDP officials that Iranian forces had pushed 40 kilometres into northeast Iraq.

The two Kurdish factions, split along political and tribal lines, have a long history of bloodshed and shifting alliances with the main powers in the region — Iraq and Iran.

Mr. Talabani told BBC radio that the region could split into pro-Iraq and pro-Iran camps and dropped a

broad hint that his group would look to Tehran for support if Washington and its allies did not respond to Baghdad's intervention.

In Baghdad, the Mujahideen-e-Khalq, the main Iranian opposition group, denied that it was involved in the fighting. A Mujahideen spokesman, refuting a claim by the Iraqi National Accord Movement that Mujahideen fighters had cleared the way for the Iraqi army to move into northern Iraq and had fought alongside the Iraqi military against the PUK, said: "Such fabricated and absurd claims serve only to cover up the (Iranian) clerical regime's intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan and its dispatch of thousands of Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) to control and interfere in the region."

Iraq said it launched the attack because the PUK had been cooperating with Iraq's longtime enemy Iran.

A U.N. official in Erbil contacted by telephone from Baghdad said Saturday's fighting in the city of some one million people had left around 100 civilians and combatants dead.

"My estimate is that 100 are dead if you count the Peshmergas," or Kurdish guerrillas, said the official, adding he did not know how many were wounded.

The official said more than 100 Iraqi tanks as well as 100 military trucks were still deployed in Erbil.

(Continued from page 1)

Foreign Minister David Levy, on an official visit to Egypt, said that secret contacts were under way between Israeli and Palestinian officials and that "we hope to reach agreement today" that would show "tangible progress" in the stalled peace process (see separate story).

Faisal Hussein, the top Palestinian official in Jerusalem, added to the pressure on Israel, warning that the Palestinians would unilaterally declare the creation of "an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital" if there is not rapid progress in the peace process.

"A meeting (between Arafat and Netanyahu) is a must, but it must not be just a photo opportunity, there have to be concrete results," he said.

Mr. Arafat himself has in recent days raised the spectre of a new intifada by a Palestinian populace fed up with months of stalemate and economic hardships linked to headline Israeli policies in the territories.

Meanwhile senior Israeli officials told the Jerusalem Post newspaper that secret talks between top Netanyahu and Arafat aides were close to yielding a significant series of "understandings" to get the peace process off hold.

The accomplishments of these talks should form the groundwork when negotiations on fulfilling the Palestinian self-rule agreement resume this week for the first time since Mr. Netanyahu won election in May at the head of a right-wing coalition, many of whose members are firmly opposed to Palestinian autonomy.

The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior Israeli official as saying the talks "are in the advanced stages of obtaining understandings which will break the deadlock and give the peace process a real push."

The understandings reached so far include Israel authorising an increase from about 40,000 to 50,000 in the number of Palestinians allowed to work in Israel, a measure badly needed to ease

Arafat-Netanyahu meeting reportedly expected soon

economic problems in the Palestinian territories, the newspaper said. The Palestinians also agreed to new discussions on the terms for Israel's delayed withdrawal from the West Bank city of Hebron, the major issue left outstanding from the 1995 interim peace accords, it said.

There were no signs of progress, however, in the secret contacts over the emotional issue of Jerusalem, which Mr. Netanyahu has refused to include in future negotiations on a permanent settlement with Palestinians despite Israel's commitment to do so under the interim accords.

And nothing filtered out about a possible easing of the new government's policy of expanding Jewish settlements on the West Bank, part of the territories where Palestinians want to create their state.

The Jerusalem Post said:

The "dark channel" — so named due to these meetings being shrouded in gray on a flow chart presented to Mr. Netanyahu — began on Aug. 13 and continued due to the quiet and persistent efforts of Norwegian mediator and U.N. coordinator for the territories Terje Larsen, with the assistance of his wife, Norwegian diplomat Mona Juul.

The set of understandings — to be called a "non-paper" in diplomatic jargon — include the following:

• The Netanyahu government will increase the number of Palestinian labourers permitted to work in Israel from 37,000 to at least 50,000. On Friday, the prime minister's office announced tersely, following a meeting with Netanyahu and top aides, that there is an intention to ease the closure.

• Israel will permit the opening of a Palestinian airport in Dabaniya in Gaza, with the understanding that Israel will retain security inspection controls, as it does at the Rafah and Al-Nebya crossings.

Authority will meet to discuss mutual changes in the Hebron redeployment agreement.

• After the Hebron issue is resolved, Israel pledged to negotiate further redeployments in the territories which are mandated by the Oslo II accord. Under that accord, the first pullback is scheduled for September 7.

In addition, verbal understandings are also being worked out. Specifically, the Palestinian (National) Authority will keep institutions in Jerusalem closed, and Israel will ensure that Arafat does not have trouble flying his helicopter between Gaza and the West Bank.

Both sides have an interest in keeping Jerusalem a verbal issue and not putting it in writing. For Israel, it is self-evident that the PNA institutions should remain closed, because this was already agreed to in the past. For the Palestinian side, however, putting this in writing might cause domestic opposition.

At the same time, it seems that Arafat's willingness to close the offices down was due to expectations that Israel was about to make some quid pro quo — by agreeing to the understandings listed above.

"Significant gaps remain, yet the Oslo train moves forward. It seems like just as it looks that we are getting derailed, we get back on track," Larsen said, but he refused to confirm that any secret talks were taking place.

An Israeli official praised Larsen, saying his commitment derived from being the one who started the Oslo talks in January 1993. The official said: "He is completely committed to protecting the agreement he fathered."

During the last few days, Larsen was joined in his efforts by U.S. special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross and U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk. Netanyahu originally rebuffed U.S. efforts to join the talks, apparently believing this would lead to pressure, but

this has apparently not been the case.

Both Larsen and Gold briefed Ross during a visit to Paris last week. Moreover, Mr. Abbas kept top Egyptian officials informed, and Mubarak's national security adviser Osama Baz was briefed in Paris last week, as well.

Meanwhile, while Gold was being criticised in the media for failing to create "chemistry" with Palestinians, he was quietly negotiating the particulars of the deal.

Abbas said about his Israeli interlocutor, "I can do business with Gold."

So far, the "dark channel" has survived both public crises between Netanyahu and Arafat — albeit with considerable difficulty — internal rivalries on both the Palestinian and Israeli side.

Complicating the talks, for example, has been Palestinian succession politics between Ahmad Qureia and Abbas. Qureia, who negotiated the original Oslo accord, Gaza-Jericho and Oslo II accords, accused his political rival Abbas of the same charge candidate Netanyahu levelled against Shimon Peres during the campaign: making too many concessions on Jerusalem.

On the Israeli side, Foreign Minister David Levy's insistence on a greater role in the peace process, and the right to approve every meeting, led to talks being delayed at one point for days. Levy favoured the creation of a steering committee headed by a figure outside the prime minister's office that would weaken Netanyahu's hold on the talks, but in fact, the understandings seem about to be reached without the steering committee ever convening.

While Netanyahu's office and Gold repeatedly sought a meeting for Dan Shomron, head of the steering committee, with Arafat, the Palestinian leader turned this down as he wanted talks to focus on the informal channel. In the end, Shomron joined the last meeting of

the channel last Thursday.

Apart from the internal rivalries and intrigue, external events impacted upon the negotiations. During the original Oslo talks, Arafat was secluded in Tunis and did not allow adverse Palestinian public opinion — to the Hamas deportees or the closures — to impact on the substance of the talks. But now that Arafat is in Gaza he has had to react differently.

After he agreed to the closure of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem, Arafat viewed the announcement of further construction in the settlement of Kiryat Sefer as something he could not let pass. Arafat viewed such events as an effort to humiliate him personally and would privately say that Netanyahu was "not an honourable man."

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For his part, Netanyahu has been concerned about two external events.

First, there is the scheduled meeting Thursday in Washington of more than two donor countries which could have turned into a "blame Israel" session, as Palestinians are complaining that a \$90 million deficit for 1996 was due to Israel's closure of the territories.

Western diplomats have speculated that the lack of discernable movement on the peace process combined with any refusal by the donors to provide more funding to the PNA, would lead Egypt to cancel the regional economic summit planned for Cairo in November, and pin the blame on Netanyahu's refusal to move forward on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

This change was bound to be echoed by Shimon Peres, the driving force behind the regional economic summits, which began with the conference in Casablanca in 1994.

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

regimes or disputes with their neighbours," he indicated.

The GCC study said foreign capital, especially from industrial states, could largely benefit Arab economies as it will bring in cash and technology and help upgrade local products and find new export outlets.

It also could have negative effects as some investors disregard domestic development and environmental concerns of the host country, it added.

"But we should look to these negative effects objectively. Such problems could not be tackled altogether and we should not adopt a completely negative stand. Everything in the world carries negative and positive elements..." the study stressed.

"We call on Arab states, especially the GCC, to revise their strategies concerning the attraction of foreign investment ... They should go further in liberalising their economies and encourage investment in all sectors," it urged.

THE ROYAL DUTCH Airlines (KLM) office in Amman, Saturday, hosted a reception at the Regency Palace Hotel to review KLM's march and award certificates of appreciation to travel agents who exceeded expectations in terms of their sales of tickets on KLM flights. Addressing the gathering, the KLM office manager, Sbarif Fathi, reviewed KLM's achievements in Amman over the past year, and noted the unique services provided by KLM. He added that KLM has won the satisfaction of its agents as well as its clients. "Had it not been for the support KLM received from official Jordanian institutions, including Royal Jordanian, the Civil Aviation Authority, as well as travel agents and passengers, these achievements would not have been accomplished. Mr. Fathi said. The reception was attended by a large number of travel agents, businessmen and media representatives.

I WOULDN'T WANT OUR SON TO PLAY WITH A NEW BOY THAT MIGHT HAVE A BAD INFLUENCE ON CICERO!

I'LL FIND OUT!

--AND WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

?

?

AL SMITH

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take any health treatments you may need during the daytime today however avoid risky business affairs tonight so that you can handle any difficult situations which could develop. This is a good time for completing new projects.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Make a plan today just how to gain your most desired private aims. Come to the right decision and forget pleasing others who do not have your best interest at heart and don't what you be successful in the days ahead.

(August 22 to September 22) Plan how to please any close friends today who have proved loyal and steadfast with you and you can gain more good will. Later this evening you can consult with a knowledge person and gain much needed advice.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Handle those outside duties today which are important during the daytime however avoid seeking pleasure this evening since you discover that you need to consult with a bigwig and complete a new project.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get new ideas operating today which can make your life much brighter in the days ahead. Take it easy at home with your loved ones and relax for you will have important duties to contend with later this week.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Keep busy at personal, practical affairs today however remain loyal to the persons who are loyal to you. Later this evening you can seek out close friends and have a fun time together out on the town.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Be more successful in a partnership with fellow associates today by being enthused and ethical and thereby you will be noticed by those in authority. Ease the mind of your mate later this evening by doing some special tasks which her or she desires.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can accomplish a great deal today, so keep busily occupied at the practical. Take things in stride later this evening and you can achieve much success in the days ahead if you are diligent in your duties.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day today for improving friendly relationships and your romantic life, so by all means proceed on both counts. Forget the dreary tasks tonight which pre-occupy your minds and just spend a relaxing time with loved ones..

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis Lazuli.

Large economic team to accompany Ciller on visit to Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 70-member Turkish businessmen and economic delegation, accompanying Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller on her visit to Jordan due to start Tuesday, will hold extensive talks with Jordanian officials and members of the business community on means of boosting trade and economic ties between Ankara and Amman, according to a press release issued by the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) Sunday.

The JBA is hosting a meeting and a dinner banquet for the delegation at the Amman Philadelphia Hotel on Tuesday evening to be attended by at least 150 Jordanian businessmen representing various industrial and commercial sectors in Jordan, said the statement.

The Turkish delegation represents a wide range of Turkey's industrial and commercial life including the chambers of industry and trade, manufacturers of pharmaceuticals, food, chemical products, electrical appliances as well as firms dealing with meat, live sheep, cooking oil, vegetables and fruit among others.

At the banquet and in separate meetings, the Turkish and Jordanian business people will explore various areas for cooperation in trade and joint-ventures, said the press release which also noted that Turkey and Jordan are linked by the Turkey-Jordan Business Council established in 1994.

The statement said that businessmen from the two countries have held a series of meetings in Amman and Istanbul and they plan to hold a third meeting for their business council in Amman in November.

The JBA statement recalled that it had organized Turkish trade fairs in Amman in the past two years and received several Turkish business delegations in Jordan for economic and business discussions.

Hundreds of Kuwaiti debtors face bankruptcy courts

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Hundreds of Kuwaiti debtors are facing bankruptcy proceedings after failing to pay the first installment of a multi-billion dollar debt settlement programme, the central bank governor said in remarks published Sunday.

Some 741 debtors with debts totalling about 1.342 billion dinars (\$4.5 billion) have been referred to the public prosecutor, the governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Sheikh Saleh Abdul Aziz Al Sabah told the official Kuwaiti news agency KUNA.

The debtors failed to meet

the first installment in April in a repayment programme aimed at resolving a \$20 billion debt problem which has plagued the local economy and financial sector since the early 1980s.

The governor said in the interview published in the local press that 8,852 debtors had so far met their commitments in the debt settlement programme, and these debtors together owe some 4.856 billion dinars (\$16.2 billion).

Many smaller debtors have already repaid their commitments in a one-off settlement, but large-scale debtors responsible for

most of the debts mainly chose to pay by installments.

According to a debt settlement law passed by parliament in 1995, debtors could choose between a 12-year settlement in full or a 5-year cash installment programme with up to 46 per cent forgiveness.

Most debtors chose the second option. Each of the five installments until 2000 is worth a total of about 450 million dinars (\$1.5 billion).

Repayments for the first deadline in April reached some 77 per cent of the total due, and bankers are

confident that the next installment due on Sept. 6 will receive a similarly strong response.

"I am personally fairly optimistic ... I think this September should not be that much of a problem," said one bank chief.

But he cautioned: "There is a worry about next year, rather than this installment. People can raise one or two installments, but as more installments come due they (the debtors) are digging deeper into their pockets."

The \$20 billion debt problem was mainly the result of the 1982 crash of the Souk Al Manakh

Increases in prices seen most dangerous issue facing Jordanians

This is the first of a two-part summary outlining the views of a former official on the economic situation and challenges facing the Kingdom.

** THE MOST dangerous issue that will face Jordanians is probably the increase in prices, former minister Jawad Anani said in an interview. The solution, he added, is to increase investments through searching for and accurately defining investment opportunities and urging people to invest in them. "Without such scientific investment, any dialogue about development would be just mere talk of little benefit," Dr. Anani stressed.

He said: "I do not believe that the present government departments are capable of developing the concepts they have been used to the extent of developing production in Jordan. Therefore, there is a need to create new institutions."

Asked about the economic growth and why the people are not seeing tangible effects, Dr. Anani explained that there

was an imbalance in the distribution of income and wealth. That, he said, reflects on limited income families and puts additional burdens on them.

Dr. Anani, a prominent economist and analyst, attributed the current slowdown in the Jordanian economy to the channelling of savings and investments. He indicated that individuals and families are no longer controlling the savings as banks have become the parties in charge of the Kingdom's savings and available funds. The banks in addition to provident funds, insurance companies and other social security funds are being conservative in their spending, Dr. Anani said noting that these institutions usually look for easy and guaranteed investments that generate returns higher than yields from productive projects. "Consequently, this leads to the constriction of economic veins and requires a solution," he added (Al Aswaj).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOLDING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 607172 / 607175											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 01/09/1996											
PART 12	MOVES	COMPANY'S NAME	P / N	DIV.	NO. OF TRADING	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENT
250,000	205,000	ARAB BANK	12.7	1.61	17	340	78870	211.50	332.00	50+	0.00
6,700	4,350	CALUD AMMAN BANK	9.2	3.37	3	4720	21001	4.50	4.45	-0.05	-0.00
5,700	4,250	COM. HOLDING BK.	12.4	2.98	3	950	4396	4.66	4.63	-0.03	-0.00
1,240	680	JOB. BILLY BANK	5.5	7.62	3	20500	18880	92	92	0.00	0.00
4,180	3,300	JOB. ISLAMIC BANK	17.2	0.00	1	5000	17900	3.60	3.58	-0.02	-0.00
2,430	2,330	DELTA AL-HAL (BILITRA)	1.5	6.28	4	1232	2920	2.34	2.30	-0.04	-0.01
1,090	240	AMMAN BANK INT.	9	0.00	20	22300	5382	2.25	2.24	-0.01	-0.00
1,680	1,000	PHILADELPHIA, INV. CO.	9	0.00	2	1200	1333	1.11	1.11	0.00	0.00
MARK SECTOR TOTALS											
2,910	3,150	JOB. FRANCE INSUR.	6.2	9.05	3	450	997	2.20	2.21	0.01	0.00
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
1,900	2,450	JOB. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.7	7.79	15	9726	8732	1.54	1.54	0.00	0.00
1,560	1,140	IRRID. ELECTRICITY	9.7	6.78	15	700	1053	1.46	1.48	0.02	0.00
2,120	2,080	WATER. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	15	5900	7102	1.20	1.21	0.01	0.00
2,460	1,700	WATER. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	2	750	1378	1.84	1.83	-0.01	-0.00
1,280	960	WATER. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	32	18500	20049	1.09	1.10	0.01	0.00
2,430	1,700	UNITED CO.	9.7	5.41	10	2000	5183	1.66	1.66	0.00	0.00
1,200	820	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	1000	900	0.51	0.51	0.00	0.00
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
111,05	111,05	INDEX	111.05	0.00	309	29233	312715				
144.27	144.27	INDEX	144.27	-0.05	443	50329	51879				
GRAND TOTAL											
128	128	INDEX	128	0.00	128	130844	74359				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 01/09/1996											
800	510	CENTRAL DES. INSTITUTE	22.1	0.00	1	850	903	0.65	0.54	-0.11	-0.00
950	420	JOB. TRADING INC.	18.5	0.00	10	7400	4712	0.62	0.62	0.00	0.00
960	420	NATL. COMMER. CENTERS	2	0.00	10	450	450	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00
960	700	UNION INV. CO.	69.8	0.00	8	20950	4812	0.73	0.73	0.00	0.00
1,200	520	ARAB VEH. CENTER	2	0.00	15	18500	9218	0.64	0.64	0.00	0.00
1,350	780	GRVIL. METALS	2	0.00	2	1000	750	0.75	0.75	0.00	0.00
970	510	ARAB FOOD & IND.	1	0.00	1	1350	163	0.65	0.65	0.00	0.00
1,170	510	WAT. & SEW. IND.	1	0.00	8	5900	700	1.42	1.41	-0.01	-0.00
1,160	530	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	2	600	330	0.55	0.55	0.00	0.00
1,100	580	NATL. KULT. IND. SAMICO	2	0.00	12	20362	12019	0.60	0.59	-0.01	-0.00
1,000	710	JORDAN STEEL	14	0.00	14	6250	691	0.49	0.49	0.00	0.00
840	430	ARAB ALUM. IND.	2	0.00	3	2750	1210	0.46	0.44	-0.02	-0.00
940	520	ALUMINUM IND. 75	2	0.00	5	5074	3290	0.64	0.64	0.00	0.00
1,710	1,100	UNION TOBACCO 75	1	0.00	4	1400	1446	1.16	1.16	0.00	0.00
980	630	RAIL. IND. 55	2	0.00	4	4807	1346	0.63	0.63	0.00	0.00
850	440	IND. IND.	32.0	0.00	10	4848	2362	0.52	0.52	0.00	0.00
1,460	1,070	JOE. CHEN.	2	0.00	6	1800	1200	0.68	0.68	0.00	0.00
960	640	WAT. & SEW. IND.	2	0.00	3	17200	10975	0.64	0.63	-0.01	-0.00
1,500	630	MID. EAST COMPLEX	6.4	0.00	22	12250	8725	0.71	0.72	0.01	0.00
GRAND TOTAL											
128	128	INDEX	128	0.00	128	130844	74359				

* New 12 months low
* Listed during the past 12 months
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more
N : Negative P/E
E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates						Prices as at 1/09/96 19:06				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF	
US Dollar		1.4810	0.6404	1.2010	106.45	1.2666	1511.43	1.5610	5.0705	
DM Mark	0.6752		0.4307	0.5111	73.11	0.9187	1017.11	1.1198	3.4176	
GB Sterling	1.5815	1.5615		1.8709	169.90	2.1539	2360.10	3.5937	7.5176	
CHF Franc	0.8326	1.2240	0.5307		110.12	1.1332	1253.26	1.3821	4.2044	
JP Yen	0.0092	1.3647	0.5896	1.1067		1.2593	13.83	153.06	4.6724	
CAD Dollar	0.7317	1.0510	0.4679	0.8760	1.28		1103.27	1.2127	3.6988	
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9793	0.4232	0.0794	136.84	0.9037		10.36	3.3359	
NL Guilder	0.6020	0.8914	0.3832	0.7243	85.25	0.8225	908.68		3.0518	
FR Franc	0.1972	0.2931	0.1263	21.5637	31.27	0.2795	32.750			



Michael Chang of the USA celebrates following his five-set win over Vince Spadea at the U.S. Open in New York. Chang, the 2nd seed, won 6-4 5-7 2-6 7-5 6-3 (Reuters photo)



Vince Spadea of the United States reacts to a line call during the 5th set of his 4th round U.S. Open match against American Michael Chang. Spadea lost the five-set match (Reuters photo)

Chang holds on for five-set win; Graf, Agassi advance at U.S. Open

NEW YORK (AFP) — Michael Chang's persistence and experience paid off on Saturday as he emerged victorious from a rough five-set match with unseeded Vince Spadea in the third round of the U.S. Open tennis championships.

"I was definitely in a hole out there," said Chang, who started to climb out of it when he broke Spadea to love when Spadea served the match at 5-4 in the fourth.

"I was really tired in that fifth set," Chang said. "I just tried to hang tough."

Chang, ranked third in the world and seeded second here, won 6-4, 5-7, 2-6, 7-5, 6-3 in three hours and 49 minutes, taking his win-loss record in five-setters to 18-8. Spadea, ranked 69th in the world, fell to 0-2.

"To be honest, I don't really know how I was able to win today's match," Chang said, adding that it might have to do with his ability to keep trying, even when defeat seems inevitable.

"In all the matches that I've played, if I'm down a match point or the other guy's serving for the match, I don't count myself out," he said.

Chang's victory in the 10th game of the fourth launched a string of 11 unanswered points. It was the first of five games in a row that took him to a 2-0 lead in the fifth before he dropped his own serve to let the gap shrink to 2-1.

He went up a break for good in the sixth, when he took a 4-2 lead.

"He raised his level and I didn't get too many serves in, didn't attack," Spadea said. "I didn't hit my shots the way I had been to get to that point."

Spadea, who beat sev-



Sixth seed Andre Agassi, from the United States, follows through on a return to Netherland's Jan Siemerink during their 3rd round match at the U.S. Open in New York (Reuters photo)

enth-seeded Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov to reach the fourth round here last year, saved one match point in the ninth game with a backhand volley winner before Chang put away a backhand of his own.

Meanwhile another battle was raging out on court 16 of the National Tennis Centre where Spaniard Javier Sanchez saved four match points in the fifth-set tiebreaker to beat Australian Jason Stoltenberg 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (8/6).

Stoltenberg saved two match points in the 12th game of the last set to force the decider, which he led 6-2 before Sanchez roared back with the last six points

of the match. Sanchez set up a fourth-round meeting with France's Arnaud Boetsch, who beat American Jeff Tarango 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (8/6). Swedish 13th seed Thomas Enqvist beat Ecuadorian Pablo Campana 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

Sixth-seeded American Andre Agassi used a third-set tiebreaker to post a straight-set victory over unseeded Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (9/7).

Agassi was relieved to get it done in three after trailing 4-1. "I didn't feel it was necessarily a great breaker that I played, but I managed to

win it," he said. "It's nice not to be out there playing a fourth set when you were in control of the match the whole time."

In the fourth round Agassi will play David Wheaton, who beat fellow American Alex O'Brien 1-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-2.

Chang will face Switzerland's Jakob Hlasek, who downed Argentina's Hernan Gury 7-5, 6-1, 6-2.

Russian 15-year-old Anna Kournikova stunned Austrian 14th seed Barbara Paulus 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 to reach a fourth-round clash with world number one Steffi Graf.

"I'm really excited about it," said Kournikova, who displayed remarkable poise playing under the lights on stadium court.

"The first set I was a little bit nervous," she said. "I stayed calm and kept my concentration. I didn't try to end the points quick. I was real patient. Even if I was losing, I wanted to give her a good match."

Graf defeated Natasha Zvereva 6-4, 6-2 in the third round, taking her total of victories over the Belarusian to 16 in 16 matches.

Third-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario needed less than an hour to steamroll Russian Elena Likhovtseva 6-1, 6-0. She advanced to a fourth-round meeting with another 15-year-old, Swiss 16th seed Martina Hingis. Hingis beat Japan's Naoko Kijimuta 6-2, 6-2.

Seventh-seeded Czech Jana Novotna advanced with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Tami Whittinger-Jones. Novotna next meets Slovakian Karina Habsudova, who beat Austrian Sandra Dopfer 6-2, 6-3.

He remained at home in Dublin but is expected to give his thoughts on his future when he arrives at Monza for the Italian Grand Prix on Thursday.

Hill splits with Williams team

LONDON (R) — World championship-leading Briton Damon Hill will leave the Williams motor racing team at the end of this season, it was confirmed on Sunday.

Team owner Frank Williams said in a brief statement: "I can confirm that the Williams-Renault team will not be using Damon Hill's services in 1997. His replacement will be made known in due course."

Hill's manager and lawyer Michael Breen told a news conference in London that the Williams team had ended contract discussions with the 35-year-old Englishman abruptly last Wednesday.

Breen said both he and Hill were surprised and disappointed by the news. Sources in Germany and Britain told Reuters on Saturday and again on Sunday that Hill's seat with the championship-winning team had already been filled for next season by rising German star Heinz-Harald Frentzen.

Frentzen, currently with Sauber, has not won a Grand Prix but is believed to be a driver of potential who is admired by many Germans. It is thought that Williams are keen to use German BMW engines in 1998 when their current deal with Renault ends.

The news that Hill was effectively being dumped by Williams in the season when he is expected to win his first drivers' championship, stunned many observers but left veteran drivers in Formula One recalling the Williams team's handling of many similar situations in the past.

In 1992, Briton Nigel Mansell secured the drivers' championship before being replaced in the team by Frenchman Alain Prost. Prost himself won the title in 1993 only to find he was being replaced the following season by Brazilian Ayrton Senna.

Breen pointed to Hill's excellent record with Williams which has included 20 Grand Prix victories, 19 fastest laps and 18 pole positions. "Those facts speak for themselves and I am sure that many team owners will be interested in taking him on," said Breen.

Hill, 13 points ahead of Williams team mate Jacques Villeneuve at the top of the championship standings, was not at the news briefing.

He remained at home in Dublin but is expected to give his thoughts on his future when he arrives at Monza for the Italian Grand Prix on Thursday.

Real manage draw as Spanish championship kicks off

LA CORUNA, SPAIN (R) — A late goal by newly-signed defender Roberto Carlos saved the blushes of Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello and his multi-billion peseta line-up in the opening game of the Spanish championship on Saturday.

The Brazilian's 79th-minute effort was enough to earn Real a point from a scrappy 1-1 draw at fellow title contenders Deportivo Coruna.

Deportivo started strongly, taking the lead midway through the first half when former Auxerre playmaker Corentine Martins headed home a corner after a flick-on by Brazilian-born Spanish international midfielder Donato.

Real looked to be in deep trouble shortly after the break when Luis Milla was sent off for committing two bookable offences in as many minutes.

But Deportivo were unable to capitalise on their numerical advantage, and were themselves reduced to ten men when

Armando Alvarez was sent off 15 minutes from time.

Shortly afterwards Roberto Carlos found space in the home defence and equalised for Real with a shot that was deflected past despairing Deportivo keeper Jacques Songo'o.

In a frantic final five minutes there were chances at both ends, and Donato, who had earlier been booked, was sent off for protesting about the incursion of Real players at a free kick.

Before the match Deportivo chairman Augusto Lendoiro said he would ignore a FIFA decision banning Brazilian midfielder Mauro Silva from playing in the match for failing to join his national side's tour of Europe.

In the event, coach John Toshack decided not to use Silva, who had claimed he did not join the Brazil squad because he had lost his passport.



Atlanta Braves' catcher tags out Chicago Cubs' baserunner Leo Gomez in the seventh inning in Chicago's Wrigley Field. The Cubs won, 12-0 (Reuters photo)

Adams throws shutout, McGwire homers as A's crush BoSox

OAKLAND (R) — Young Willie Adams threw a five-hit shutout and mighty Mark McGwire hit his first home run as the Oakland Athletics blanked the Boston Red Sox Saturday for the second straight game, 8-0.

Adams (2-2), a 23-year-old right-hander making his ninth career start, walked one and struck out nine in his first complete game and first shutout. Adams retired 12 consecutive batters in one stretch from the second through the sixth.

In Seattle, Bobby Bonilla had three RBIs, including two on a homer that broke a tie in the fifth inning and lifted the Baltimore Orioles to a 7-6 victory over the Mariners.

Baltimore won for the fourth time in six games but remained four games behind the first-place Yankees in the American League East. The Orioles remained tied with the Chicago White Sox in the wild-card race while the Mariners fell two games off the wild-card pace.

Scott Erickson (9-11) gave up five runs and six hits with four walks and three strikeouts in 6 1/3 innings, but stayed around long enough to get the win.

Ken Griffey hit a two-run homer, his 41st, for Seattle. Alex Rodriguez went 2-for-4 to extend his hitting streak to 16 games (.477, 31-for-65) and raise his league-leading average to .375.

At California, Derek Jeter had a career-high four RBIs and Jimmy Key pitched eight strong innings in his longest outing of the season as the New York Yankees routed the Angels 14-3.

The Yankees struck for seven runs in the third and chased starter Jason Dickson (1-2). Jeter was in

a 5-for-32 slump before his two-run single gave the Yankees a 6-0 lead.

In Texas, Darren Oliver came within two outs of his second complete game and Dean Palmer and Warren Newsom homered on consecutive pitches in the second as the Rangers defeated the Cleveland Indians 6-3.

Oliver (11-6) allowed three runs and nine hits in 8 1/3 innings for Texas, which improved to 5-0 at home against the Indians this season.

Reds crush Marlins

Kevin Mitchell drove in a career-high six runs and pinch-hitter Lenny Harris hit a grand slam as the Cincinnati Reds overcame an early five-run deficit and pounded the Florida Marlins 22-8 Saturday.

The Reds sandwiched 40 runs of offense around a 3-1 loss Friday to the Marlins, having beaten Colorado 18-7 Thursday.

Reds starter Kevin Jarvis (7-7) got the win despite allowing six runs — three earned — and seven hits over five innings. Marlins starter Kurt Miller (1-2) was shelled for six runs and three hits in 1 1/3 innings.

Devon White homered for the Marlins, who had their seven-game winning streak snapped. The 22 runs were the most scored against Florida since it entered the National League in 1993.

"Hey, those things happen," Marlins manager John Boles said.

In Chicago, Frank Castillo threw 6 2/3 scoreless innings to upstage the Braves debut of Denny Neagle as the Cubs hammered Atlanta 12-0.

Ozzie Timmons homered and drove in four runs.

Brian McRae homered and drove in three, and Luis Gonzalez hit a two-run shot as the Cubs won for the third time in four games.

In Montreal, Omar Daal allowed one hit over five innings in his first Major League start and Mike Lansing and Mark Grudzielanek each had two hits and an RBI as the Expos snapped the San Diego Padres' six-game winning streak, 4-2.

The loss cut the Padres' lead over second-place Los Angeles to one game in the National League West.

In Philadelphia, Greg Gagne and Todd Hollandsworth each had two-run doubles and Raul Mondesi clubbed a two-run homer during an eight-run fourth inning as the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Phillies 11-7.

The Phillies, the first team officially eliminated from post-season contention, have dropped six of their last seven.

In Pittsburgh, the Houston Astros scored three times in the ninth to beat the Pirates 5-4.

In St. Louis, Andy Benes scattered four hits over eight innings for his 12th win in 13 decisions and Ray Lankford belted a two-run homer to give the Cardinals a 3-1 triumph over the Colorado Rockies.

In New York, Roberto Petagine and Alvaro Espinoza hit back-to-back homers in the sixth and three pitchers combined on a six-hitter as the Mets broke an eight-game losing streak, 7-2, over the San Francisco Giants.

The losing streak was New York's longest since 1993. Manager Bobby Valentine got his first win in five games since replacing the fired Dallas Green.

Spanish, U.S. teams open on road for 1997 Fed Cup

NEW YORK (R) — This year's Fed Cup finalists — defending champion Spain and the United States — will hit the road to open the 1997 women's international team competition, based on the draw conducted Saturday at the U.S. Open.

Spain travels to Belgium, while the U.S. team heads to the Netherlands for first-round matches arch 1-2. The other two first-round ties will pit hosts Germany against the Czech Republic

and visiting France against Japan.

The semifinals are July 19-20, and the final September 27-28.

Life on the road this year did not slow the Americans, who will try to avenge their 3-2 defeat in the final last year when they host Spain on September 28-29 in Atlantic City.

"Last year we stood on the court after we had lost and we put our hands together and made it our commit-

ment to bring back the cup," U.S. Captain Billie Jean King said at the draw. "That is our sole goal."

The United States edged Austria in Salzburg 3-2 in the opening round in April, and then blanked Japan 5-0 in Nagoya last month in the semifinals.

The victory against Japan marked the Fed Cup debut of Monica Seles, who became a naturalised U.S. citizen in 1994. Seles easily won both her singles match-

es and King is counting on the co-world number one to lead the team again.

"I told Monica we need her if we want to win," King said.

Seles's sore left shoulder and a wrist injury to Fed Cup veteran Mary Joe Fernandez have forced King to take a wait and see attitude regarding her squad for the best-of-five match. Fernandez was forced to withdraw from the U.S. Open.

"What we like would be Seles, (Olympic champion Lindsay) Davenport and Mary Joe Fernandez," said King.

If she can get that threesome together, King will feel good about her chances against the Spain's formidable duo of Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Conchita Martinez.

"To be a great coach you have to have the right horses and I got the right horses," said King.

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Vicenzo Scifo of Belgium (left) fights for the ball with Abdullah Ercan of Turkey (2nd left) while Turkish Recep Cetin (2nd right) and Belgian Gert Verheyen (right) look on at the action during their World Cup, Group 7, qualifying soccer match at the King Baudouin Stadium in Brussels. Belgium beats Turkey 2-1 (Reuters photo)

World Cup qualifiers

Scots make their point as N. Irish and Swiss are stunned

PARIS (AFP) — Scotland grabbed a precious away point after holding Austria to a goalless draw with a gutsy display in Vienna on Saturday as they opened their 1998 World Cup qualifying campaign.

But as Craig Brown's stalwarts came away from their first major excursion of the new season with the feeling of a job well done, there was doom and gloom in Belfast as Northern Ireland's began their programme disastrously by going down 1-0 at home to Ukraine.

With European champions Germany and the talented Portuguese in their Group Nine, Bryan Hamilton's men now have a mountain to climb following Sergei Rebrov's goal 11 minutes from the end.

Wales kept up their hopes of making it to the finals in France by hitting six goals without reply in Cardiff as they completed their double over minnows San Marino, although star winger Ryan Giggs picked up a booking which rules him out of the next qualifier against Holland.

And the Republic of Ireland were also amongst the goals as they buried the unhappy memories of last year's goalless draw in Vaduz which cost them a place in Euro 96 by handing Liechtenstein's part-timers a 5-0 drubbing in Vaduz.

Mick McCarthy's new-look side romped to victory at the Picturesque Eschen Sportpark with four goals in the opening 20 minutes.

The Irish shrugged off the late loss of Liverpool midfielder Jason McAteer with a stomach bug as Blackburn's Jeff Kenna stepped ably into the breach for the Group Eight clash.

And urged on by more than a thousand travelling Irish fans, the visitors went ahead

on five minutes through Aston Villa's Andy Townsend. Two minutes later, Keith O'Neill of Norwich notched Ireland's second before a brace from Sunderland's Niall Quinn and one from Leeds' Ian Harte.

Also in Group Eight, Romania defeated Lithuania 3-0 in Bucharest, Chelsea's Dan Petrescu among the scorers.

Elsewhere, Northern Ireland were not the only side licking their wounds after Saturday's action.

Switzerland, who qualified for the 1994 finals in the United States, as well as this summer's Euro 96, crashed to an astonishing 1-0 defeat in Azerbaijan in Group Three to blow that group wide open.

The Azeris had previously been thrashed 5-0 in Norway, while Hungary and Finland have yet to play.

And even stylish Portugal also had little to celebrate as they hung on grimly for a 0-0 draw in Armenia on a night to remember for them and their Azeri former Soviet neighbours.

Belgium, Group 7 rivals of the Welsh, got off the mark with a 2-1 win at home to Turkey with goals from Marc Degryse and Luis Oliveira.

And Belarus, pitched in with the Scots in Group Four, beat Estonia 1-0 in Minsk, the goal coming from Vladimir Makovsky.

France beat Mexico

Euro 96 absentee Nicolas Ouedec and Youri Djorkaeff scored the goals as 1998

World Cup hosts France beat Mexico 2-0 in a friendly international on Saturday.

The victory extended to 29 matches France's unbeaten run under coach Aimé Jacquet, their Euro 96 semi-final elimination having come in a penalty shoot-out, but was marred by the sending-off of Chelsea central defender Franck Leboeuf.

Leboeuf was dismissed two minutes from time for a second bookable offence, fouling Mexican substitute Ricardo Pelaez who minutes earlier had also been shown the yellow card for pushing the Chelsea defender in the back.

Both goals came early in the second half after France had surprised the Mexicans with three half-time substitutions.

After a sterile first half, France injected more sting in midfield with the introduction of Juventus' Zinedine Zidane.

This allowed Djorkaeff to play further up and his cross from the right fell for Ouedec, who has joined Espanyol of Barcelona from Nantes since missing the European Championship finals through injury, to score after a mistake by midfielder Joaquin Del Olmo.

Within four minutes Ouedec was returning the compliment for Djorkaeff, playing a one-two with the Internazionale Milan forward down the middle to set him up for a cross shot past diving goalkeeper Osvaldo Sanchez.

Jansher Khan loses Hong Kong final

HONG KONG (R) — Australia's Rodney Eyles inflicted a rare defeat on Pakistani world number one Jansher Khan on Sunday to lift the Hong Kong Open title.

Eyles, whose career has been overshadowed by Jansher since he lost to him in the 1986 world junior final, had a surprisingly easy 15-10 15-10 15-5 victory over the top seed to deny him an eighth Hong Kong Open triumph.

It was only the sixth defeat Jansher had suffered in major championships since 1992 and his first since England's Del Harris beat him in the super series play-offs earlier this year.

Eyles, the second seed, found his length and rhythm quickly and completely dominated the match. Jansher was slow in reacting to the Australian's drop shots, made several uncharacteristic errors on seemingly simple shots and appeared to throw in the towel midway through the third game.

In his semifinal win over Australia's Anthony Hill on Saturday, Jansher had looked less than fully fit and Eyles exploited his lack of stamina by forcing him into long rallies early in the match.

Jansher led briefly during the second game but a series of deft drop shots brought Eyles level and the

Australian went on to take control.

"I am very satisfied with today's win — I was desperate to beat him," said the 28-year-old Eyles after receiving his winner's cheque for \$11,220.

"It is good for the sport to see someone's else's name on the winner's cheque. It must be hard for him to keep fronting at tournaments and winning," Eyles added.

Jansher, who has won the world open a record seven times, said that he had experienced a rare bad day but was confident of bouncing back.

"I had a bad day and Rodney had a good day and he won," he said. "I could not do anything right today — my backhand volley is usually a winning shot but today it kept going in to the tin."

"I am not a machine and sometimes it's good to lose. It will mean I will train harder and concentrate better at the next tournament. Just because I have lost once does not mean I will lose my confidence."

Asian Basketball Championship

Jordan loses opening match, plays the Philippines today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S under-18 basketball team got off to a bad start when they lost 67-42 to Qatar in the first of their matches at the Asian Junior Basketball Championship which opened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Sunday.

The Qatari team had won the first half 31-21 before limiting Jordan's scoring ability to seal the match with a 25-point win. Delegation officials said the Qatari team was difficult to beat having come to the tournament well-prepared and had a solid chance to qualify to the semifinals.

Jordan next plays the Philippines today (Monday) and then meets Singapore in the final match of Group 3 Wednesday.

The other three groups include:
Group 1: Korea, India and Malaysia
Group 2: China, Kazakhstan, Japan and Bangladesh
Group 4: Thailand, Chinese Taipei, Iran and Hong Kong.

Only the top two teams in each group

will qualify to the semifinal round which starts Sept. 5. The competition concludes Sept. 10.

The Asian Basketball Confederation had placed Jordan atop Group Three after having won third place in their first Asian participation last year. The team then beat hosts the Philippines in the final second 72-71. Singapore 88-35, Hong Kong 71-24, Japan 73-56 and Thailand 62-56. They lost twice to eventual titleholders South Korea 75-61 and 69-51 and to second-placed China 88-49 in the semifinal round.

However, the team does not appear to be in a similar form this year as a host of reasons prevented them from better preparing for the 15-nation tournament.

The team includes Tawfiq Marar, Iyad Abdeen, Ayman Du'ibes, Bashar Huneidi, Mrhef Nabulsi, Ala' Bilbeisi, Ra'fat Daraghmeb, Mobammad Bashir, Mo'tasem Salameh, Bassam Qamhih, Nihad Madi, Leith Farouqi and Omar Abdallat.

Stoke go top in English 1st division

LONDON (AFP) — Stoke lost their 100 percent start to the new season but still went top of the English first division after a 2-2 draw at Reading on Saturday.

Lou Macari's men looked set to retain their perfect start to their promotion bid when Richard Forsyth gave them a 76th minute lead but could hold their lead for only three minutes before Paul Holsgrove levelled the

game.

A seventh minute penalty from former West Ham star Trevor Morley had earlier given Reading an early advantage, but Stoke hit back after 25 minutes with a goal from the prolific Mike Sheron.

With overnight leaders Barnsley not in action, Stoke head the table with 10 points from their four matches despite several

players leaving the club during the close season.

The fastest goal of the day was at Oldham, when Paul Riechers gave the home team the lead against Ipswich after just 15 seconds — and his early strike set the tone for a thrilling 90 minutes. The match ended 3-3.

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Abu Shakra staff attend training course in Geneva
ABU SHAKRA Trading Agency, in conjunction with Elizabeth Arden International Company, conducted a training course in Geneva (the headquarters of Elizabeth Arden) for a selected group of Abu Shakra staff members to brief them on the latest from Elizabeth Arden in

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Palestinians stage mass prayer in Jerusalem to protest Israeli policies

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Senior Palestinian officials attended Sunday mass in the church of the Holy Sepulchre as part of a campaign to reaffirm Palestinian claims on the Holy City, but appeals for a mass turnout by Christians at the service went unheeded.

Faisal Hussein, the senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) official in Jerusalem, led a delegation that included several ministers in the self-rule government of Yasser Arafat to the service in the church that Christian tradition says marks the site where Jesus was crucified and resurrected.

But only a hundred worshippers attended the Greek Orthodox service, the same number which traditionally attends weekly Sunday mass.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat called this week for a massive turnout by Muslims at Friday prayers in East Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque and by Christians on Sunday in a sign of protest over the stalemate which has gripped the peace process since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to office.

Witnesses on the border between the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem said there was no increase in the usual number of Palestinians trying to pass through Israeli army checkpoints on Sunday.

Israeli travel restrictions, imposed after bombings by



Faisal Hussein, the top Palestinian official in Jerusalem, at a mass prayer inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Sunday (Reuters photo)

milicians in February and March, ban most of the two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza from entering Jerusalem.

Israel on Friday ringed the city with police and roadblocks. Palestinians said

heat of Jerusalem's walled Old City.

Mr. Hussein dismissed media speculation that the low turnout reflected popular dissatisfaction with Mr. Arafat, who has slammed Israel's decision to expand Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

"This call was not for all the Palestinian people," Mr. Hussein told reporters after attending services at a Greek Orthodox chapel adjacent to the sacred Christian shrine.

He said Mr. Arafat's call had been intended only for leaders of the Palestinian community in Jerusalem and that the PLO could have mobilised tens of thousands of protesters but had chosen not to escalate tensions.

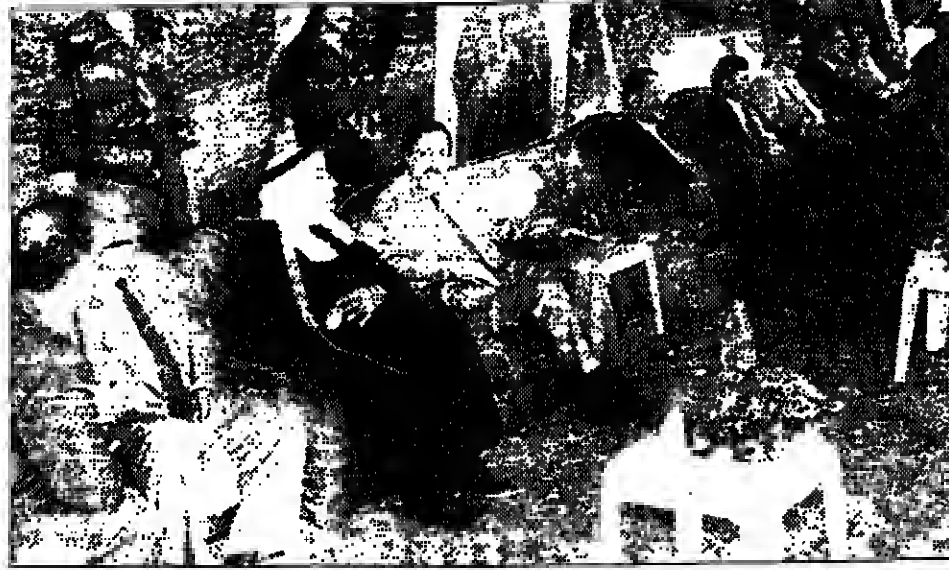
"The world must know that Muslims and Christians are not free to arrive at their holy places," Mr. Hussein said.

Less than five per cent of the two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are Christian.

Mr. Netanyahu on Sunday said Mr. Arafat's call to prayer was "ill-considered and irresponsible" but was pleased the weekend passed calmly.

Ibrahim Kandalaft, Mr. Arafat's adviser on Christian affairs, said during Sunday's mass, "we are here to protest against the illegal measures being taken by Israel, especially the destruction of buildings in Jerusalem."

"Let us pray for Israel's leaders to honour their commitments," he said.



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, accompanied by several ministers, meets with local leaders during a visit on Sunday to the eastern outskirts of Amman (Petra photo)

Kabariti visits east Amman, pledges all efforts to offer services to all citizens

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti said on Sunday his government would spare no effort to provide the best services for citizens in all parts of the Kingdom, adding that the government is keen on providing such services in accordance with an order of priorities determined by the availability of resources.

Addressing Al Da'aja tribes during a tour to Abu Alia and Tareq areas in the eastern outskirts of Amman, Mr. Kabariti said the inspection visits and tours made by ministers reflect the government's keenness to reach citizens, communicate with them and listen to their concerns and problems.

Mr. Kabariti was accompanied by ministers of public works and housing, post and communications, agriculture, education, supply and social development, in addition to Amman governor and mayor, and directors of the various departments in Marka area.

Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Al Majali announced the government's plans to allocate state land to citizens and encouraged them to utilise it in the best manner. He said the government was in the process of drawing up a law, allowing the allocation of land and organising its use.

Accusations of bribery mar Beirut elections for parliament

BEIRUT (AFP) — Voters in Beirut went to the polls Sunday in the third round of Lebanese parliamentary elections amid widespread opposition accusations of bribery and irregularities by supporters of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Early figures put voter turnout at less than 30 per cent, lower than the government expected but higher than the 10 per cent registered in the last elections in 1992 which were widely boycotted in protest at Syria's strong influence in the country.

Mr. Hariri, who headed a list of 17 candidates, mostly wealthy businessmen, was among those running for 19 parliamentary seats in the Lebanese capital.

Opposition candidates accused Mr. Hariri's team of buying people's votes on Sunday, with prices ranging between around \$100 and \$200.

The Hizbollah candidate, Mohammad Berjawi, said Mr. Hariri's followers distributed officially-sealed voting slips outside polling stations to "people who are voting in return for 100,000 Lebanese pounds (\$75)."

Najah Wakim, another

candidate and strong critic of Mr. Hariri, appeared live on television with dozens of such voting slips and also charged that a number of polling station head officers were replaced by staff from private companies owned by businessmen close to the prime minister.

Former Prime Minister Salim Hoss, another opponent of Mr. Hariri, said his delegates were prevented from entering polling stations to monitor the operations along with representatives of other candidates.

Prime minister since 1992, Mr. Hariri has said he was seeking a popular mandate for his multi-billion dollar programme to reconstruct Lebanon after its 1975-1990 civil war.

He even said that defeat at the ballot box would mean a rejection of his policies and force him to resign.

His American-style electoral campaign, whose cost outstripped that of all other candidates, included sea parades and air shows.

Beirut's finest caterers offered tens of thousands of food packages to his delegates at the 846 polling stations and his followers manning more than 200

campaign offices.

"The finest food is not going to bring the finest leader," said a 28-year-old delegate for Mr. Wakim.

Interior Minister Michel Murr said a number of people accused of voting with false identity cards were arrested in Sunday's polls.

A judicial source said they included 16 followers of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah.

The polling took place in an atmosphere of calm, except for a fistfight in front of a polling station at mid-day between Hizbollah followers and those of the pro-Syrian Amal movement that forced the army to fire machine guns in the air and arrest three people.

The Beirut elections are the third in Lebanon's region-by-region polls for the 128-seat parliament. Some 377,000 people were registered to vote for 92 candidates contesting 19 seats up for grabs in the capital.

Voting has already taken place in Mount Lebanon and the north, while further rounds are scheduled on Sept. 8 in South Lebanon and Sept. 15 in the Bekaa Valley of eastern Lebanon.

Egypt set for largest trial of militants in 15 years

CAIRO (AFP) — State prosecutors on Sunday filed charges against 65 militants with the state high security court ahead of their trial for a wave of bombings and attacks, police said. "It will be the largest trial since the hearing into the assassination of former President Anwar Sadat in 1981 when more than 100 members of the Jihad were charged," said a police official.

The 65 accused, all in detention since their arrests in 1994, were said to be members of the armed wing of the main outlawed militant group the Gamaa Islamiyah, and have admitted being part of forces led by Talaat Yassin Hammam, one of the main Gamaa leaders killed in a shootout in 1994.

They are charged with more than 40 attacks from the end of 1993 to the beginning of 1994, including the bombings of several Cairo banks in February 1994. They have also been accused of the murders of General Rauf Khairat, who headed up the fight against the militants in the Interior Ministry, and security services chief Ahmad Shaalan. In addition, the group has been charged with firing on a tourist bus in old Cairo wounding eight Austrians and eight Egyptians and attacking two cinemas in the Helwan suburb of the capital in December 1993.

Iran's conservatives oppose extension of Rafsanjani term

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian conservatives and hardliners put up stiff resistance Sunday to a call by moderates to amending the constitution so President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani can run for a third term in office.

"The constitution should not change with any little excuse. This could lead to a weakening of the law and is not to the interest of the country," Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said.

"If we do this it means there are no other forces to run the country and this is an injury," he was quoted by the official news agency IRNA as saying.

The speaker is a great favourite of the conservative camp to replace Mr. Rafsanjani, who under the constitution may not seek a new mandate when his second term expires next July.

But Mr. Nateq-Nuri said he had not yet decided whether to run in next summer's presidential elections.

His comments came as Tehran Radio announced that the president would leave Monday for visits to Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Mr. Rafsanjani's moderate supporters have intensified their lobby for a constitutional change that would

allow him to run for a third term, although the president himself has opposed the idea.

The daily Resalat, which reflects the views of the right, warned Sunday any efforts to amend the law in favour of Mr. Rafsanjani would make "Iran appear to the world as a country that makes itself conform to the wishes of its leaders, rather than the opposite."

Mr. Rafsanjani's supporters argue the president has been highly successful in his seven years in office, notably in carrying out development programmes, and that he would be hard to replace.

But the headline weekly, Kayhan Havaei, ridiculed this logic, saying the president should not be the only one to receive credit.

"Institutionalising the law would be the best guarantee to ensure the continuation of the construction drive," it said. "A change in the government will not even slightly halt the trend."

Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is the only person here with the power to change the law, but he appears to be opposed to the initiative.

Mr. Rafsanjani's moderate supporters have intensified their lobby for a constitutional change that would

Saddam seeks to 'secure oil pipeline'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein launched an offensive in northern Iraq to ensure vital oil exports to Turkey, but are not held hostage by hostile Kurdish factions, diplomats and officials said here Sunday.

Iraq said on Saturday its troops had supported fighters from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to force rival Kurdish group the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) out of the main Iraqi Kurdistan city of Erbil.

The dawn attack, under a heavy barrage of artillery, came after fierce fighting between the PUK and KDP which erupted on Aug. 17.

An Iraqi political official told AFP that the PUK, accused by Baghdad of receiving backing from Iran, "tried to occupy the frontier region at a time when we are preparing to resume oil exports" for the first time in six years.

He said the PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, had "tried to break through into the Ibrahim Al Khalil region which controls the border" with Turkey.

The official said the PUK aim was "put their hands on the revenue the KDP receives from cross-border trade," adding that control of the Turkish frontier would leave Baghdad

dependant on Mr. Talabani for oil exports to Turkey.

Baghdad is preparing to resume limited oil exports, primarily through a pipeline in northern Iraq to Turkey, under an easing of the U.N. sanctions imposed after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Under the terms of the deal agreed under U.N. Resolution 986 in May, Iraq can export \$2 billion of oil every six months under strict international control to buy humanitarian supplies.

"By occupying the frontier region, the PUK would be in a position to control oil exports... by, for example, threatening to sabotage the oil pipeline so as to put pressure on the government to increase the allocation" of humanitarian products to regions under PUK control, said the official.

He added that Turkey had also asked the U.N. to approve cross-border trade with Iraq, and that PUK control of the border region would have severely compromised a possible agreement.

Under the U.N.-approved distribution plan, around \$300 million is to be allocated for supplies to Iraqi Kurdistan, which has been jointly controlled by the PUK and KDP in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war.

An Iraqi government spokesman said late Saturday that Iraqi forces in northern Iraq would withdraw "very soon" and that the terms of the misso had been accomplished.

KDP representative in Ankara Safen Dizayee said his organisation's forces had taken control of Erbil from the PUK, and that there was not "even one single Iraqi soldier" in the city.

Diplomats in Baghdad said President Saddam had other strategic reasons to align himself with KDP leader Massud Barzani. "By forging an alliance with the KDP, Baghdad is making commercial projects with the Turks possible and also taking a political foothold in northern Iraq," said one diplomat.

Baghdad lost control of northern Iraq when allied forces imposed a "no-fly-zone" on the region to protect the Kurdish population from Iraqi troops in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war.

Both the PUK and KDP won 50 per cent of the seats in 1992 parliamentary elections, but their power-sharing agreement broke down into armed conflict in May 1994 and an estimated 2,200 people have died in the ensuing conflict.

Egypt dismisses British explanations of conference

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt on Sunday accused Britain of backing terrorism after officials in London said they would allow a conference of Islamic fundamentalists to go ahead as planned next week.

"We cannot accept statements by London that British law allows the convening of such meetings out of respect for democracy, human rights and freedom of expression," Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali said.

"To authorise such a meeting shows a will to provide assistance and facilities to these criminals (Islamic militants) who are plotting against the countries," General Ali told the government daily Al-Ahram.

Gen. Ali said the militants "are granted entry visas into Britain to coordinate their destructive activities, without any problems."

On Thursday the British Home Office said it had "no power to ban" the rally for revival conference set to take place in London on Sept. 8.

"We are well aware of this rally, but we have no power to ban it," said a Home

Office spokeswoman in London.

"The police will be closely monitoring this meeting" and will intervene in the case of any legal violations, particularly involving incitement to racial hatred, the spokeswoman said.

She was speaking after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak slammed the London gathering, which is expected to bring together several thousand Islamic fundamentalists, as a rally for "terrorist" interests.

"I am surprised at the holding of such a conference which will include many of those elements who encourage terrorism," Mr. Mubarak said last week.

"This conference does not serve the international struggle against terrorism," said the Egyptian president whose country has been plagued by a violent Islamic anti-government campaign since 1992 that has killed more than 1,000 people.

Egypt says Muslim fundamentalists sought by Egyptian police in connection with the militant violence are among those expected at the London conference.

Sharaa expected in France for peace process talks

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa is expected in Paris on Monday for talks on the Middle East peace process amid hopes in Damascus that French diplomacy can put Israeli-Arab peace talks back on track.

Mr. Sharaa's visit comes after warnings in the official Syrian press of a "new spiral of violence" which could erupt in the Middle East because of the "extremist positions" of the right-wing government in Israel.

Political sources in Damascus said the foreign minister's scheduled meetings with French officials are part of the ongoing contacts that have floundered between France and Syria since French President Jacques Chirac took office.

They pointed to the visit to Syria in July of French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette, as well as to the two visits made by Syrian Deputy President Abdul Halim Khaddam to France in July and December.

"France has shown itself to be a country with an independent policy that tries to play a high-profile role by concentrating on French and European interests in the

region," said an Arab diplomat here.

"Syria is in favour of a more active and effective role for France in the Middle East," he said.

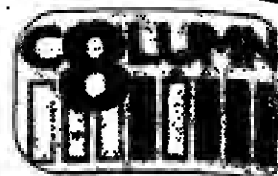
The diplomat said Mr. De Charette's role in helping to forge a ceasefire between Israel and Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon in April had won friends in Syria.

He added that the truce was "the fruit of direct cooperation between Paris and Damascus."

Mr. Sharaa's trip follows a meeting in Paris last week between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's top foreign policy advisor Dore Gold, senior Egyptian official Osama Al Baz and U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross to discuss the Syria track and other aspects of the peace process.

Mr. Sharaa said on Tuesday that Damascus was ready to pick up peace talks with Israel, but only at the point where they left off in February.

"We will not resume the negotiations from scratch to spend another five or 10 years in discussions, our people will never accept that," Mr. Sharaa said.



Ince exposed by Gascoigne's latest prank

CHISINAU, Moldova (R) — England's irrepressible midfielder Paul Gascoigne was up to his old tricks, pulling down his team mate Paul Ince's trousers in front of an astonished crowd in Moldova. Ince was clambering over a wall at the Republican Stadium in Chisinau as Glenn Hoddle, England players tried to escape heavy rain during an under-21 clash. Gascoigne, whose compulsive practical joking has landed him in trouble in the past, tugged down the Inter Milan player's trousers in front of a group of press photographers. Hoddle, coaching the side for the first time, declined to comment on the incident.

Colombian top cop's son seeks 'Mr. World' title

BOGOTA (R) — The son of Colombia's barrel-chested and tough-talking national police chief will represent Colombia in the first-ever "Mr. World" beauty pageant, Bogota's El Tiempo newspaper said. It said the pageant, organised by the same people responsible for the "Miss World" contest, would be held in mid-September in Istanbul, and that Colombia would be among about 50 countries participating. Gen. Rosso Jose Serrano Serrano, 25-year-old son, Franz, is a professional model who El Tiempo said was recently elected "Mr. Colombia" in a local run-up to the "Mr. World" contest.

Lesbian couple hold first gay wedding in Austria

VIENNA (R) — Austria's first homosexual wedding took place Saturday after days of controversy among Protestant clerics over whether to allow the service to go ahead. Around 100 people gathered in the Evangelical Church in Vienna's Sinnering district to witness the service for the lesbian couple, the first homosexual wedding to be officially blessed by a religious authority in this staunchly Roman Catholic country. The two women, named only as Julia and Irene, wore skirts and black jackets and both carried bouquets of white and yellow flowers. One is a Viennese woman, the other is German.

U.S. club to boast unionised nude dancers

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Nude dancers at a San Francisco club have voted to become the only ones in the United States to belong to a union, union officials said. Employees of the Lusty Lady Club in San Francisco's North Beach district voted 57-15 to unionise in the National Labour Relations Board election held Thursday and Friday. A spokeswoman for local 799 of the Service Employees International Union said. No other exotic dancers in the nation are known to belong to a union. Strippers at a San Diego club set up an open union shop several years ago, but the club is no longer unionised, union officials said. Club managers, who are reported to oppose the union drive, could not be reached for comment Saturday. Customers enter booths at the club and pay to watch scantily clad dancers on a stage. The dancers have demands on various issues, including job security, working conditions, sick leave and health insurance. "We're workers. Our work is to be a sex object, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be guaranteed certain basic protections and rights," a dancer at the club, identified only as Jani, told San Francisco's KCBS Radio this week.